Tawhid, Monotheism – Six Speeches

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Sayyid Ali Khamene'i

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This book is a collection of six speeches delivered by Sayyid Ali Khamenei on the topic of Tawhid in the month of Ramadan 1971 at Masjid Imam Hasan (‘a) in Mashhad, Iran. Sayyid Khamenei talks about the Islamic vision of the universe where every existence is linked to a powerful creator and this power or omnipotence is God. He has all the basic good attributes such as knowledge, control, will, life etc. From the smallest particle to the heavens, moon, stars and unknown galaxies, everything is in His control. Every reality in the universe, human beings and others owe their creation and life to Him and are His slaves and servants.

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Publisher’s Note

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In the Name of Allah, the Most Beneficent and Merciful

A man enters the circle of Tawhid (Unity of God) by declaring la ilaha illa Allah (there is no god but Allah). He denies the existence of other gods while believing in one God. This decisive monotheism is the basis of Islamic vision and faith. This vision of God proves the principle that sovereignty is the exclusive domain of Allah; only He can make the laws and a man can only infer his rules and regulations from the light of Shari’a. Same vision of ilah tells us that a man can draw his values in life only from Allah. Any value in life that is not acceptable on Allah’s scale will carry no weight. Every law, tradition and organization that goes against Allah’s system is worth naught. Therefore, the faith in unity of God creates awareness in one’s conscience that leads to a detailed life map.

The fact of the matter is that Allah keeps watch over each and every part of this universe and is present all the time and for every situation. When Allah wanted to make the man His vice-regent on this earth,

He blessed him with His cognizance and promised that soon He will show him some markers for the right path hidden within him as well as the cosmos. This promise came true in the form of new secrets being revealed to him all the time that are essential for him to play the role of vice-regent; and as a result of discovering these principles, it became imperative on the man to achieve higher spiritual levels Allah had determined for him. The man can rise to the highest levels of greatness but cannot go beyond the limits set for Allah's servants. This book should be read to understand this philosophy.

This book of six lectures on Tawhid by Grand Ayatullah Sayyid Ali Khamenei is in your hands. It was part of a series given in the month of Ramadan 1971 at Imam Hasan Mujtaba mosque in Mashhad. The lectures were compiled in the name of طرح کلی اندیشہ اسلامی درقرآن. Our organization has already published a series of six lectures on Wilayat and another of seven on Iman (faith). This book is the third in the series and we plan to present another collection soon (God willing).

This book consists of a preface and six chapters. The preface explains how the speeches were collected. Every chapter has an appendix of the summary provided to the audience before the lecture. We have added sub-headings in every chapter for readers' ease and interest that were not there in the original book. The organization is grateful to Sister Farah Naz Naqvi for translating the preface and the appendices.

We hope this book will be welcomed by the readers like other books, the organization has published. At the end, as always, we look forward to useful feedback, advice, suggestions and viewpoints of the readers.

1. This book was translated to Urdu from Farsi by Maulana Al-Sajjad Hussain Mahdavi and published by Darus Al-Thaqalayn, Karachi, Pakistan in December 2015. It was translated from Urdu to English by Syed Saeed Haider Kazmi. For any queries about the English translation, he may be contacted via email -- skazmi.re@gmail.com [7].

Preface

Forty years have passed. Forty years ...

In 1971 AD and 1353 of Iranian calendar, the Imam of a small under construction mosque by the name of Masjid Imam Hasan Mujtaba ('a) in a corner of Sarshore Bazar in sacred Mashhad arranged a program at the beginning of the blessed Ramadan. A thirty five years old handsome and attractive young man, Grand Ayatullah Sayyid Ali Khamenei, holding gracious Qur'an started a one hour lecture after the mid-afternoon prayers The topic of his lecture was "A Complete Map of Islamic Thought in Gracious Qur'an".

As soon as the program started, it felt like the environment of sacred Mashhad city suddenly changed. In

the hot weather and the month of Ramadan after mid-afternoon prayers people typically rested in their homes and cities would be deserted. However, this year there was frenetic activity in the southern part of the city. Old, young, men and women, thirsty with dry tongues in the intense afternoon heat were coming in droves to the small under-construction Imam Hasan (‘a) masjid so they could benefit from the spiritual and blessed feast provided by this young Sayyid and quench their intellectual thirst in the best month of the year.

Every day more and more people are showing up in this holy gathering and now people cannot find space even in the large garage behind the mosque. As far as one can see, there are people. Every class and race is represented here. There are university students, shopkeepers, traders, locals, boys and girls, men and women, old and young.

Everything is fresh and new in the lectures by Grand Ayatullah Sayyid Ali Khamenei. A photocopy with the summary of the lecture is given to everyone before the lecture starts. Instead of sitting on the mimber, the speaker is standing behind a podium. While in the condition of fasting the speaker talks in a loud voice with a lot of zeal. A Qur’an reciter recites in a beautiful voice the same verses discussed earlier in the lecture. The lecture makes the mosque look more like a classroom.

This was the time when Pahalvi dynasty had been in power for many years. It was a system of dictatorship. Oppression and persecution reigned. Killings and jail sentences were ubiquitous. This was the darkest hour when Imam Khomeini had been exiled. Not a word could be said against the satanic government even in any religious gathering. Savak was in full control; there were spies everywhere. Even recitation of Qur’anic verses related to jihad was a crime. If a speaker recited a verse that mentioned Israelites or even if he just mentioned the word Israel, his lecture was stopped and he was thrown in jail. In these worst of times this young Sayyid was standing up in Masjid Imam Hasan. This pupil of Imam Raza (‘a) knew how to speak and advance his lectures while staying out of reach of Savak wolves. This Sayyid with his prudence created such a learning environment that those who were previously staying away from gracious Qur’an got educated with the light of Allah’s word.

Grand Ayatullah Sayyid Ali Khamenei with his deep knowledge and wisdom presented Islamic beliefs and tenets in the language of the gracious Qur’an in such a way that the public started thinking about forming an Islamic society in addition to rejuvenating their beliefs based on Qur’anic understanding. Ayatullah Sayyid Ali Khamenei started the series of lectures with the topic of Belief (Iman). Then he moved to Unity of God (Tawhid). He ended the series at the end of Ramadan by going through Prophethood (Nubuwwat) and Guardianship (Wilayat). The young Sayyid planted the seed of faith in the hearts of the Mashhadi youth through his lectures; he developed friendship between them and the gracious Qur’an and placed it in the hands of these young by taking it out of storage, graveyards and “Qur’an recitation” gatherings.

For many years, a group of people with inadequate knowledge of religion kept people away from Qur’an and the religion through their dry thoughts. As an example, their idea was that it was not easy for a

layman to understand Qur'an and the holy book should be read only to earn thawab (reward); etc, etc. This was one of the concepts that the satanic government at the time had also embraced but Ayatullah Sayyid Ali Khamenei declared it either the enemy's propaganda or lack of intellect on the part of the elite. He himself was totally absorbed in the gracious Qur'an; he was a devotee of Qur'an and was determined to take the Qur'an out of its estrangement and isolation. He, with his tall structure, stood all alone at the podium with the Qur'an in his hand and spoke with passion. He would devote all his presence to the Godly words. He wanted to rejuvenate the ideas and reflections of Islam with the Godly language and bring the gracious Qur'an back to the hearts and actions of the Muslims. He would lament against the followers of satan who wanted to limit the everlasting miracle of the last Prophet (S) to beautiful cover and pages.

"It is a pity on those people who keep others away from the gracious Qur'an; they keep them afraid of Qur'an; they use different excuses to stop them from opening the Qur'an with the intention of understanding it. Woe to them. All of you brothers and sisters! Know that today we are working only with the gracious Qur'an as the most gracious Prophet (S) said,

فَاذَا التَبَسَت عَلَيكُمُ الفِتَنُ كَقِطَعِ اللَّيلِ المُظلِم فَعَليكُم بِالقُرآنِ.

When trials envelop your lives like the darkness of the night, Qur'an is your savior.[1]

When is that day coming? Are we not seeing dark as night ordeals?

Are we not observing ever changing paths with our lifeless eyes?

Isn't an observant eye seeing robbers in different forms and gangs of thugs?

When should we revert to Qur'an? When?

Would it be when the Imam of the time (may Allah hasten his appearance) shows up?

Since he is the talking Qur'an when he comes, we will have to turn to Qur'an.

The gatherings in Imam Hasan ('a) Masjid with lectures on Nahjul Balagha (Peak of Eloquence) opened the minds of the attendees as if the black shroud over their eyes came off. However, the satanic government was also mindful of it. Ayatullah Sayyid Ali Khamenei was arrested and taken to the torture cell. This was the worst torture cell of the time. کمیتہ مشترک ک ضد خرابکاری

Over forty years have passed since this unforgettable blessed Ramadan and this river of knowledge and insight was limited to the audience present at that time while other knowledge thirsty people were deprived of it. There were rumors about this trove of Qur'anic knowledge for forty years. There was only a booklet with the subject طرح کلی اندیشہ اسلامی درقرآن that gave us assurance about the existence of these lectures.

We were trying to find the original lectures in addition to this booklet for years. We were praying and it was our heart-felt desire too. The famous Qur'an reciter of Iran, Agha Sadaat Fatimi, was one of the closest associates of Ayatullah Sayyid Ali Khamenei before the Islamic revolution and continued to be on the side of the Rahber-e-Azam (the great guide) after the revolution. He had done a lot of work on the publications of Qur'an. One day his interview was telecast where he mentioned his Qur'anic activities before the revolution and his center for sale and purchase of cassettes at Kyaban-e-Sana Abad in Mashhad. He also talked about the Qur'an related services of Ayatullah Sayyid Ali Khamenei and his lectures at Imam Hasan ('a) Masjid; he also touched on the fact that it was his responsibility to record the lectures. Right after watching this program without wasting any time we traveled to sacred Mashhad. We had no address other than Masjid Imam Hasan and Masjid Karamat. We entered the mosque at prayer time and looked for elderly people. We inquired about the whereabouts of Agha Sadaat Fatimi. They told us about several masajid. We looked for him from one masjid to next. In the meantime, we found out about Aghas Sayyid Murtaza and Sayyid Jawad. We went to see Agha Sayyid Murtaza and then finally succeeded in reaching Agha Fatimi's Markaz Amozash Qur'an.

We made a reference to Agha Fatimi about his interview and inquired about the recording of Ayatullah Sayyid Ali Khamenei's lectures. He said that all those recorded lectures had already been published in a book form and we could get the material from this book. However, when we mentioned that it was not a book but only a booklet and that it only had photocopies of the summaries of the lectures, he was surprised and dismayed. He could not imagine that people had been missing such a valuable treasure for the past forty years. When we inquired about the cassettes, he told us that the original cassettes had been deposited to the office of Rahber-e-Azam but he had copies and he handed over those copies to us.

Forty years later, yes, it was rather late. A lot of time had passed. However, it is time to be thankful to Allah (SWT) that the treasure was dusted after such a long time and this invaluable jewel was brought to daylight.

Every word of Ayatullah Sayyid Ali Khamenei reveals his youth, passion, dignity and perseverance. Get ready to profit from this treasure hidden for forty years – the book

طرح کلی اندیشہ اسلامی درقرآن; i.e. the Complete Map of Islamic Ideology in Qur'an[2].

اللَّهُمَ لَکَ الحَمدُوَلَکَ النَعمَتُہ وَلَکَ المنُ

[1]. Bihar Al-Anwar, vol. 74, page 177, and Vol. 28, pag.286
الحديث موجود في بحار الانوار الجزء ٧٤ صفحة ١٧٧ وكذلك في الجزء ٢٨ الصفحة ٢٨٦

[2]. This book was published in Farsi for the first time by the organization, Sahba Iran.

First Speech: Tawhid In The Islamic Vision Of The Universe

بِسْمِ اللَّـهِ الرَّحْمَـٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

اللَّـهُ لَا إِلَـٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ ۚ لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ ۚ لَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ مَن ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِندَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ ۚ يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ ۖ وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ ۚ وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ ۖ وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا ۚ وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ

Allah – there is no deity except Him, the Ever-Living, the Sustainer of [***all***] ***existence. Neither drowsiness overtakes Him nor sleep. To Him belongs whatever is in the heavens and whatever is on the earth. Who is it that can intercede with Him except by His permission? He knows what is*** [***presently***] ***before them and what will be after them, and they encompass not a thing of His knowledge except for what He wills. His Kursi extends over the heavens and the earth, and their preservation tires Him not. And He is the Most High, the Most Great.*** (***Qur'an, 2:225***)

Tawhid (Monotheism): A Responsibility

In brief, the subject of our discussion is to choose and separate the verses in gracious Qur'an related to Tawhid and translate them before you. Then you can draw your own conclusions. In the eyes of Qur'an:

- What is Tawhid?
- What does it mean for commitment and action in life?

For example, faith in all religious thoughts and principles:

- Should not be blind but based on understanding and knowledge
- Should carry certain responsibility

What we believe in, should place a certain responsibility on our shoulders. What we believe in should be related to our lives, our actions – individual or collective in society; related to either individuals themselves or the society at large; related to either humanity or future happenings; whatever it is, should lead to a definite responsibility.

When we enter the discussion on Tawhid with this introduction, this discussion turns into a

responsibility–creating discussion for us. We will examine Tawhid in such a way that firstly, we reach Tawhid through awareness; secondly, we inquire about the responsibilities that Tawhid places on our shoulders. Is Tawhid simply awareness of something without responsibility and commitment? Is it just grasp of a reality without feeling any responsibility? Or no. Tawhid is such an awareness that makes performance of certain duties and responsibilities obligatory on the man. When you consult Qur'an you will find the answer to this question.

The verses under review today are about Tawhid from a specific point of view. Insha Allah in the next discussion the verses will be about Tawhid but from a different viewpoint. In the coming days again the verses will be about Tawhid but each from a specific point of view. I cannot claim that it will be possible for me to completely describe Tawhid in Qur'an and all aspects of Islam through a few days' discussion using help from Qur'anic verses. The fact of the matter is that if people will spend more time and attach themselves to Qur'an through its study with intelligence, they will find a boundless ocean on Tawhid. Our conversation in these sessions will be limited due to paucity of time.

Let me remind you that it is possible that a discussion on Tawhid related Qur'anic verses, using a process that we will present, may appear to be difficult. It may appear to be a lesson as opposed to a speech. But I always used to think on my own and still wonder, is it necessary for our regular gatherings not to be lecture like and does the speech have to be something different from a lecture? What is wrong in having some people in a gathering of a large number of attendees to be ready to listen to a few things that are difficult and in need of critical thinking, just like a classroom? Is it necessary that in the month of Ramadan just because it is the month of Ramadan and everyone is fasting, the speaker should feel obligated to present his material in a sweet and enjoyable manner? Why? For how long should we not expect deeper thinking with higher quality in our congregations?

Therefore, to all of you brothers and sisters who are present today and will be there in the coming days, I cannot surmise if the discourse will be difficult for you or not; it may be difficult or it may be simple. Even if it is difficult and demanding you should study and ponder over it keeping in mind that after all it needs to be understood. Study it; use all the powers of your mind so the lecture can be understood. Safeguard the spoken words in your mind; if they are difficult, discuss them with your friends and colleagues. If the discussion appears to be strange to your mind, try not to push it away from your mind, finding it difficult and heavy. No, try to make it familiar to your mind.

However, as we have stated in several discussions, speeches and lectures, we certainly do not expect from even one individual that whatever we say will be totally accepted. On the contrary, our expectation from our friends, brothers and sisters, whatever level they are at is, that the material they are being given is food for thought – if they normally don't examine it in other places – should ponder over this material in their critical thinking laboratory and mold themselves per this Qur'anic verse:

فَبَشِّرْ عِبَادِ الَّذِينَ يَسْتَمِعُونَ الْقَوْلَ فَيَتَّبِعُونَ أَحْسَنَهُ.

Give glad tidings to my servants who listen and adopt what is good. (***Qur'an, 39:17-18***)

In any case, we have looked at Tawhid from two different angles. We have picked Tawhid to be the focal point in the Islamic vision of the universe. Certainly, Tawhid is there in the Islamic vision of the universe. What is Tawhid in the Islamic vision of the universe and in what sense? And how do the verses and the eloquent language of Qur'an explain Tawhid the way it is in the Islamic vision of the universe?

Tawhid In Islamic Ideology

For some people who do not know, the terms "Islamic Vision of the Universe" and "Islamic Ideology" will be explained briefly because Tawhid is part of Islamic vision of the universe as well as the Islamic Ideology.

Furthermore, Tawhid appears in every practical part of the Islamic doctrine. If anywhere in the name of religion you find a command, law or constitution that has Tawhid limping or absent or opposite of Tawhid is present, then know that it is un-Islamic because Tawhid is the soul in the body of all Islamic laws like soft and delicate air that is found in all parts of this building called Islam. It is like pure fresh blood that runs through this body called Islam; it is present even in the thinnest of veins. You won't find even a single command in Islam that does not have some color or mark of Islam. Therefore, today our discussion is about Tawhid in the Islamic Vision of the universe.

What does the Islamic Vision of the Universe mean? When you look at the universe and the man, you develop some ideas in your thinking and comprehension. It is possible that you have not thought about it. However, a person who muses about these things; when he thinks about this world; when he thinks about a man; when he thinks about the relationship between man and the universe; when he thinks about meta physics and the world beyond the human being and this world, he develops a series of visions and thoughts. This is called Vision of the Universe. Every school of thought has a certain way of looking at things about the world, a particular viewpoint, a specific understanding and a definite method of discovery. This specific method of discovery about the world and exclusive way of reflection is called Vision of the World. It is one of those terms that started showing up a few years ago in Farsi literature. The vision of the world does not mean broad mindedness as is often used in everyday life. We say, "a certain individual has a broad mind". No, vision of the universe is different from it.

To summarize, the vision of the universe can be characterized as the interpretation one makes about the universe, someone's thoughts about the universe and somebody's discovery about the universe or the man. We said, "a person's interpretation". It can be the inference of a school of thought, a sect or a religion. A society's way of living reflects its interpretation about the universe and this is their vision of the universe. Islam has its own vision of the universe. It has its own ideology about the universe. I will present Islamic vision only to the extent of our discussion on Tawhid.

Everything Belongs To Him

Islamic faith says that this whole collection called the universe, from top to bottom; from little existence and most inferior things to the biggest and mesmerizing bodies; from the most inferior life or no life to the most prestigious, strongest and intellectual creation i.e. human being; everything in this universe, slave, servant, etc., is the creation of a Great Power and is attached to Him. Beyond whatever we can see and touch and whatever Science can observe with its most powerful tools, there is a reality that is superior, more significant and more esteemed than all realities; and everything in the universe is His creation. We give that superior power a name –– God and Allah.

This universe is a reality that has no presence on its own; it did not come into being on its own; it did not come out of itself. Rather a most capable hand has initiated a variety of creations (as knowledge is progressing, more and more new ones are surfacing) and gave them existence. There is a competent hand that has produced a storm in a small particle and the strange worlds, galaxies and whatever is beyond galaxies that we have discovered so far and there are billions more waiting to be discovered; all of these have been created by this all powerful Entity. There is someone who created this workshop; there is an inventor of this machine; it is not by mere accident. This is the ideology of Islam about the universe.

This is some material on the Islamic ideology about the universe that I will present a little at a time. God, Who is above this universe and its inhabitants, the mighty Hand That is running this universe, is the One Who created it and keeps it alive from moment to moment. This powerful existence (whose name is Allah or God) in reality has all good attributes in Himself; i.e., knowledge; divine power; ownership of life; ownership of will; and everything else that is the source of these attributes. He did not get His life from someone else; His knowledge is not acquired and so on.

He has authority over this universe. Who are the inhabitants of this universe? What status do the atoms of this universe hold in front of Him? Once the atoms of this universe came into existence through Him like a child is born by his mother; did they get disconnected from Him? No, it is not like this. These things are dependent on Him for their very existence; they are reliant on His omnipotence and will; and they are all His servants. All existences are His servants, slaves, inventions and creations. He has authority over everyone. He has created everything with a specific system; He has given existence to all through organized and thorough laws. Today science is discovering these laws. However, my discourse is not related to this topic, i.e. existence of God and the Creator. There are many books on this subject; you can study them.

It is pertinent to mention a sentence quoted not by philosophers but by a few scientists – experts in certain sciences. These scientists work in the labs and are involved with industry and inventions. There is a book called “Evidence of God in an Expanding Universe”.[1] It is written by a few non-Iranian scholars and has been translated into Farsi by a few distinguished Iranian translators. (It is a good book

to read.) These intellectuals say that due to scientific progress, getting to the bottom of creation and existence, and with discovery of organized laws, we have come to the conclusion that there is someone who brought this universe into being. We see such order and discipline in the working of the universe that there must be someone who created and gave existence to this universe. All entities in this universe are His servants and creations; they are in His control including the human beings.

In the Islamic vision of the universe Tawhid says that there is a creator of this universe. He is a pure and subtle reality. Every element of this universe is His servant and under His control. When a Muslim looks at this universe from Islamic point of view, he does not see it as a permanent existence but rather as an existence that is connected to a superior power. What is its effect? What is the benefit? When we discuss Tawhid a bit later, we will find out how strange the effect is. We will come to know that this thought, this specific vision of the universe, this awareness about the universe and its various components, all have an effect on building a life.

Who Is Ilah?

As we study Qur'anic verses, we observe that the Sustainer of the universe mentions the same thing in the verses. I had mentioned that I will focus on verses from two places in the Qur'an. Today we will recite and translate them. The first one is from Surah Al-Baqarah famously known as "Ayatal Kursi".[2] The first part of Ayatal Kursi is relevant to our discussion. We will recite, translate and ponder over it.

بِسْمِ اللَّـهِ الرَّحْمَـٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ اللَّـهُ لَا إِلَـٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ. In the name of Allah Who is beneficent and merciful. No one is to be worshipped except Allah. Allah is such a name that no equivalent word can explain better. What is Allah? He is God. Who is God? He is one Who is لَا إِلَـٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ (there is no one to be worshipped except Him). Ilah means someone to be worshipped. Ilah is an entity that is revered by man; is looked up to with respect; is handed over total control by man of his affairs and life. It is called Ilah in the Qur'anic terminology. Those who let their carnal desires control their lives, their ilah is those desires. Those who allow an arrogant and oppressive person to run their lives, have this devil as their ilah. Those who submit to baseless traditions and beliefs without thinking, their ilah is these absurd traditions and beliefs. Whatever has unconditional authority over the existence and life of a man is his ilah.

Here Qur'an says, لَا إِلَـٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ. There is no ilah except Him. What does it mean that there is no ilah; i.e., not in this world? There were thousands of ilahs in the world – three hundred and sixty of them just in Kaaba; three hundred and sixty lifeless idols. Similar was the count of living idols ruling the world. Then how can there be no ilahs? The verse لَا إِلَـٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ there is no ilah except Him. There is no true ilah; no lawful ilah; no real ilah. If you have accepted anything as ilah except Allah, you have sinned; you have acted contrary to the truth, because there is no one except Allah deserving worship.

Attributes Of Ilah

اللَّـهُ لَا إِلَـٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ. What are the attributes of Allah – the one and only ilah? Let us discuss some of His attributes. الْحَيُّ. He is alive; everything else is dead; every existence is dead. The lifeless are obviously dead but even the alive are dead. A life that did not exist at one time and will not exist in future; a life that is always in danger of being lost; a living existence that is prone to annihilation in a split second; what kind of life is this? The everlasting; the real life the true life is that existence Who owns life and blesses all His creation with life and that is God. الْحَيُّ. That living existence. الْقَيُّومُ. That lasting existence Whose life has no end; that existence on Whom every life is dependent. If He is not there or if He does not want or will, life will cease to exist in the universe.

لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ He does not dose off or sleep. Even dosing off is not for him; what to talk about sleep. Dosing off or sleep does not separate Him from Himself. What does it mean? Even a split-second distraction is not in His existence and life. Other creations become inattentive; false gods become unmindful of themselves and those in their charge; they become inattentive of this world that is in their control. They are totally negligent and in permanent stupor. Whenever they claim awareness and consciousness, they are lying. What controls them is inattentiveness and silliness.

أَلَمْ تَرَ إِلَى الَّذِينَ بَدَّلُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّـهِ كُفْرًا وَأَحَلُّوا قَوْمَهُمْ دَارَ الْبَوَارِ جَهَنَّمَ يَصْلَوْنَهَا ۖ وَبِئْسَ الْقَرَارُ

Have you not turned your sight to those who have changed Allah's favor into blasphemy and caused their people to descend to the house of perdition; into hell? They will burn therein – a most evil abode. (***Qur'an, 14:28-29***)

Imam Musa Al-Kazim ('a) recited this verse to Haroon Rasheed's face. Did you not see those people who were ungrateful to God's blessings and took their nation and their followers to annihilation? Where is this valley of misfortune and calamity? It is hell. They ended up in hell and took their poor followers along. What a dreadful abode hell is! Imam Musa Al-Kazim ('a) used to tell Haroon Rasheed that he was one of such leaders.[3] If Haroon was not ignorant why would he take himself and his followers to hell? So the other gods are totally in the dark.

The essence that has nothing to do with ignorance is the true ruler of this universe; i.e., Allah.

لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ. It may not occur to you why removing and denying dosing off and deep sleep from God are needed here. Why? It will become clear in the future discussions. Because every gesture and every article in Tawhid are targeted at denial of fake gods and point to the defects in them. These are God's attributes that do not exist in fake gods. Such characteristics that are talked about in Tawhid should manifest in the practical lives of monotheist God worshippers. All attributes and subtleties of Tawhid should be present in the lives of monotheists. Therefore, الْحَيُّ الْقَيُّومُ alludes to the ignorance, inattentiveness and sleep of fake gods and their followers.

Intercession Without Permission

لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ ۚ لَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ. He does not dose off or sleep. Everything in the heavens and the earth belongs to Him; is in His servitude. مَن ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِندَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ. Who can intercede in front of Him without His permission? You cannot find any power that can stand in front of Him even as an intercessor. Even if anyone intercedes for others, it can only be with His permission. Prophets who intercede; Saints, Imams, the pious, believers and martyrs who intercede, do it with God's permission. Furthermore, they are not such powers that stand up to God. It is not like they have their own standing independent of the grandeur of God; they are servants of God. However, they are such servants who are worthy of God's love and blessing.

مَن ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِندَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ. Who is there to intercede in front of Him except with His permission? يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ. He knows what is in front and what is behind them. In other words, He totally wraps the lives of humans and every other existence.وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ. And they do not have even a fraction of His knowledge except what He wills.

Notice how the whole universe has been split into two classes. One class belongs to God and the other to His creation. The second class consisting of every particle in the universe is God's servant within certain bounds. Every existence is God's servant in the sense that it is in God's control and jurisdiction. They are all equal; even the greatest, the most honorable and the most valuable human being – our Prophet (S) – is God's servant, under His command, just like every other creation. Just the way every other creation is under God's control so is the Prophet (S). It is not that some prophet, someone with responsibility, someone with status, someone great, someone close to God holds some sort of a rank in front of God; they are all God's humble servants and their greatness stems from their servitude. We recite in the tashhad of ritual prayer. اَشهَدُاَنَّ مُحَمَّداعَبدُهُ وَرَسولُه. I testify that Muhammad (S) is His servant and Prophet. Being a servant is mentioned first.

وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ. His position of knowledge and might is greater than the heavens and the earth. وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا. He suffers no inconvenience in safeguarding the heavens and the earth. It is not difficult for Him. وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ. He holds a lofty station and is the greatest.

A Great Power

Overall, what do you get out of these verses? Of course, there are subtleties that exist in the verses. There are a few points and little things present in every sentence that conceivably you and I may be able to grasp; yet, there are dozens or hundreds of fine points that no one except the high-ranking servants of God can understand. اللَّـهُ لَا إِلَـٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ. The intricacies and nuances Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) can understand from this sentence, you and I cannot. So, leaving the subtleties aside what do you get out of these verses?

Generally speaking, we can very well understand Islamic ideology about God. What is it? In every

existence, there is a power by the name – God. The nucleus of all might, the core of all knowledge, life and divine power is God. On the other hand, everything is in a state of poverty and in service of this divine power. There is no difference between all things in the universe from servitude point of view. From a worthless atom to a great galaxy; from a believer to a non-believer; from an insignificant thing to a great human being; all are petty, lowly and humble slaves in front of Him.

Understanding Islamic Ideology – the practical Islamic system for the society – leaves some effects. To elaborate let me make a reference that will give your brains a shock while keeping in mind that we don't want to impress you with philosophy. As we understand that all humans are equal in the eyes of this Power, it is meaningless to make a statue of Roman Emperor Valerian[4] in the state of arrogance and haughtiness with a slave at his feet. We will say, why? Was this emperor in his own rank away from the rest of God's other slaves? This person, who is at the feet of the emperor, prostrating and begging; has he fallen to a lower rank than other servants? Don't both belong to the same class? Why is it so?

If it was not for this vision of the world, the rulers of large states, the aggressive leaders of history, big landlords, wealthy individuals and the elite who had thousands and hundreds of thousands under their control could say, "Sir, I am unique; I am different from him; he should be at my feet and I should step on him; I have been created to rule over him and he has been created to serve me. I have been created to be the king and he has been created to be miserable. I am a servant of a superior god who has more power and he is the servant of a god who has less capability. It is the same thing that the Israelites used to claim. They used to say that their God is Yahweh[5] and He is kinder to the Israelites.

The pagan idol-worshippers of India used to say that a society had four tiers and every tier had its own god who was created at a specific place. But the pure monotheistic approach of Islam asserts that all possibilities and realities come from one source, one place and one hand of the Creator. All are His servants and slaves; all are in His kingdom; all should obey Him. No one has the right to throw himself to someone else's feet; just like no one has the right to step on someone else. Just like you don't have the right to step on someone else, you don't have the right to put your head at someone else's feet. Why? Because in both situations you acted against what is right. There is no difference between someone sitting on a horse and those writhing under his horse's hoofs; there is no difference between him and the other slaves and servants of God.

لَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ ۗ مَن ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِندَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ. Who is closer to Him? Who wields power in front of Him? Who can stand in front of Him? Yes. إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ. Some can intercede but only with His permission. He surely does not allow oppressors to intercede. He allows Imams (‘a) to be intercessors. He does not let trouble-makers intercede nor permit them to stop others from interceding. The Prophets, the guardians, the good-doers, the martyrs, the high-ranking believers and those who led bitter and hard lives and consequently developed healthy souls; they fulfilled their responsibilities; they were hard on themselves to elevate themselves; they are the ones who can intercede with God. And the reason they can is because they served God more; they were more obedient to God. No one during the time of

our Prophet (S) worshipped God like him. No one during the time of the Commander of the believers worshipped like him. No one during the time of Imam Al-Sajjad (‘a) worshipped like him. The Prophet (S) was superior to everyone else; Imam Ali (‘a) was superior to everyone else; Imam Al-Sajjad (‘a) was superior to everyone else; it was not because they were Arabs but it was due to their servitude to God. This is why their rank is so high and their place is so great. This verse puts forth a principle that all realities, all creation and the whole universe are humble servants of the Lord, the Omnipotent. Whoever wants to get closer to Him needs to obey Him more. This is one verse.

God’s Son

We have selected the second verse – 88th verse of Surah Maryam (Mary) – and the subsequent verses.

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَـٰنُ وَلَدًا. They say, “God has a son.” The non-believers have said it differently; Christians in another style; Jews in their own way; Quraish and the pagans of Arabia in another; the pagans of other areas in some other way. Some used to say that God had a daughter; others said, He had a son; some said, He had both. Some said, He had one child; others said, He had countless; some said, He had a family. In any case, they said:

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَـٰنُ وَلَدًا. God has children. In what context, did they say so? Let us examine this point. The claim of some pagans, Christians and Jews about God having a family implied that there was someone in the creation of the universe that did not have servant to Owner relationship with God but children to father relationship. When the Jews said, “عُزَيرُبنُ الله. Uzair is the son of God”, what they implied was that while rest of the universe was God’s slave, Uzair was an exception. He was not a servant of God; rather he was his son. Christians say the same thing about Jesus. The non-believers said similar thing about Lat, Munat and Uzza[6] that they were God’s daughters. The pagans of Greece and Rome had similar beliefs about God having children. So, while we observe two ranks – one of God and the other of the creation that is obedient to God, they made three ranks – God, ordinary creation and the elite consisting of God’s children. The verses of Surah Maryam deny it. You should study and reflect on these verses till the end.

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَـٰنُ وَلَدًا. They say that the Merciful (Rahman) has adopted a son. لَّقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئًا إِدًّا. Verily they have made a most atrocious statement. You see the way God presents it. He calls it atrocious, dreadful and dangerous belief. تَكَادُ السَّمَاوَاتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْهُ وَتَنشَقُّ الْأَرْضُ وَتَخِرُّ الْجِبَالُ هَدًّا. It is so likely that the sky falls; the earth cracks open and the mountains break apart.

وَلَدًا أَن دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمَـٰنِ. They declared a son for the most Merciful (Rahman) and started believing in it. It is obviously a serious matter. God is not like that. He is not emotional to feel offended by abusive language. What He gives as faith is important for achieving Godly goals; and what He prohibits in the form of wicked belief is something that plays a role in fomenting trouble in the society. Negating mischievous belief is refuting a root of suffering in the society. Having a faith that God has children leads to disorder in the society; we will gain more knowledge about the damage it does as we progress

through the Unity of God discussion. In reality, this is an excuse to make servants obedient to someone other than God.

وَمَا يَنبَغِي لِلرَّحْمَـٰنِ أَن يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا. It is not befitting for God, the most Merciful, to have a son.

إِن كُلُّ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتِي الرَّحْمَـٰنِ عَبْدًا. There is no one in the universe who is not His servant. Whatever exists in the heavens and the earth is His slave. لَّقَدْ أَحْصَاهُمْ وَعَدَّهُمْ عَدًّا. God has surrounded them; He has control over them and keeps a tab on all of them. This was another verse from Surah Maryam.

To summarize, what we discussed today, was understanding the meaning of Tawhid (unity of God) in the Islamic vision of the universe. We also discussed Tawhid as an important principle in the vision of the universe. God willing, in the next discussion we will look at Tawhid as an important principle in the Islamic ideology. You see these are two different concepts. One is the precursor and foundation of the other. This is Islamic way of thinking. What does this thinking tell us? What path, plan and roadmap does it present to us? How does Tawhid fit in? It is in the Islamic ideology.

Supplement

In the Islamic vision of the universe, every existence in the universe is linked to a powerful creator and this power or omnipotence is God, Who has all the basic good attributes such as knowledge, control, will, life etc.

From the smallest particle to the heavens, moon, stars and unknown galaxies, everything is in His control. Every reality in the universe, human being and others owe their creation and life to Him and are His slaves and servants.

This ideology in the Islamic religion is the foundation of all roadmaps, plans and life-forming thoughts. The voice of Tawhid is heard in hundreds of verses in glorius Qur'an. As an example, let us look at the following few lines.

Surah Al-Baqarah (2), Verse 255:

اللَّـهُ لَا إِلَـٰهَ إِلَّا هُوَ: ***There is no god but Allah.***

الْقَيُّومُ الْحَيُّ: ***He is live and the whole universe is there because of Him.***

لَا تَأْخُذُهُ سِنَةٌ وَلَا نَوْمٌ: ***He does not need to sleep or doze off.***

لَّهُ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ: ***Whatever is there in the heavens and the earth belongs to Him.***

مَن ذَا الَّذِي يَشْفَعُ عِندَهُ إِلَّا بِإِذْنِهِ: ***Who can intercede in His court without His permission.***

يَعْلَمُ مَا بَيْنَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَمَا خَلْفَهُمْ: ***He knows whatever is in front of them and behind them.***

وَلَا يُحِيطُونَ بِشَيْءٍ مِّنْ عِلْمِهِ إِلَّا بِمَا شَاءَ: ***And they cannot acquire even a small fraction of His knowledge except what He wills.***

وَسِعَ كُرْسِيُّهُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ: ***His knowledge and omnipotence is greater than the heavens and the earth.***

وَلَا يَئُودُهُ حِفْظُهُمَا: ***And He has no trouble in protecting His possessions.***

وَهُوَ الْعَلِيُّ الْعَظِيمُ: ***His stature is high and His greatness is unbounded.***

Surah Maryam (19), Verses 88–94:

وَقَالُوا اتَّخَذَ الرَّحْمَـٰنُ وَلَدًا: ***And these people say that the most Merciful has adopted a son.***

لَّقَدْ جِئْتُمْ شَيْئًا إِدًّا: ***Verily, you have spoken a horrendous thing.***

تَكَادُ السَّمَاوَاتُ يَتَفَطَّرْنَ مِنْهُ وَتَنشَقُّ الْأَرْضُ وَتَخِرُّ الْجِبَالُ هَدًّا: ***It is so likely that the sky falls; the earth cracks open and the mountains break apart.***

أَن دَعَوْا لِلرَّحْمَـٰنِ وَلَدًا: ***They declared a son for the most Merciful*** (***Rahman***).

وَمَا يَنبَغِي لِلرَّحْمَـٰنِ أَن يَتَّخِذَ وَلَدًا: ***It is not befitting for the most Merciful to have a son.***

إِن كُلُّ مَن فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِلَّا آتِي الرَّحْمَـٰنِ عَبْدًا: ***There is no one in the heavens and the earth who is not going to appear in His court as a slave.***

لَّقَدْ أَحْصَاهُمْ وَعَدَّهُمْ عَدًّا: ***God has surrounded everyone and keeps their count.***

1. Evidence of God in an Expanding Universe was compiled by John Clover Monsma. It has forty articles about the existence of God written by experts in modern sciences. The book has been translated into Farsi by Ahmad Aram, Ali Akber Mojtehidi and Sayyid Mehdi Ameen.
2. Qur'an, 2:255
3. Tafseer Noor us Al-Thaqalayn, Surah Ibrahim, Verse 28
4. One of the great Roman emperors who used to torture Christians. He was captured in his last days in a battle with Sasanians. Christians called his capture God's punishment.
5. This is the name of the God of Jews used in Torah.
6. These names of the pagans' idols have been mentioned in Surah Najam Verses 19 and 20.

Second Speech: Tawhid In Islamic Ideology

بِسْمِ اللَّـهِ الرَّحْمَـٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ اللَّـهِ أَندَادًا يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّـهِ ۖ وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِّلَّـهِ ۗ وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّـهِ جَمِيعًا وَأَنَّ اللَّـهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ

And they say: "What is there but our life in this world? We shall die and we live, and nothing but time can destroy us." But of that they have no knowledge: they merely conjecture. (***Qur'an, 2:165***)

Great Might

Godly person says, "There is a superior and greater reality above and beyond what we see and observe; and if such a reality did not exist, nothing would have come into being". A materialistic individual says, "No, we don't believe in anything beyond what we see. We have searched hard in our laboratories and did not find any signs of what you claim." We will leave this debate about the difference of opinion between the godly and the materialistic persons for books written on the topic.

Our belief is that if the materialist of our time (we are not concerned about Democritus[1] of history or some other materialist atheist thinker who lived ten, twenty or thirty centuries ago; he is dead and his bones have turned into dust) says that there is no God; if he thinks that there is no entity beyond this universe; in reality, he has been disillusioned spiritually and mentally with the school of God. This is why he says what he says. He thinks that in the current state of the universe materialistic approach[2] is the only way to manage people, establish justice and eliminate prejudices. This is why he snubs the school of God. If we study the people who have leaned towards various "isms" in the past fifty or sixty years, it will validate what we hinted at. It is not because they have a quarrel with God or that there is no satisfactory argument about God's existence. They have not refuted or accepted God. There is no case for negating God; there is none now and there never was. You will not find anybody who can claim that there is no God based on such and such argument; not a single one. The only thing they say is that it has not been proven to me that He exists; I have not understood it; I have not accepted the argument about His presence. The Qur'an also alludes to this fact; إِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَظُنُّونَ. "These people only speculate.[3]" Otherwise, they do not have any argument to deny God.

So, it is not according to some intellectual philosophy. It is not according to some intellectual philosophy even under the realm of materialistic school of thought. The only reason one is inclined towards materialism is that he thinks it can better organize the world; it can better take care of the oppression problem; it can end the undue inequalities and discrimination; it can do a better job of uprooting

exploitation and selfishness. He claims that religion cannot do it. Why does he say that religion cannot do it? This is because he does not know much about religion other than the prevailing superficial understanding; he only sees the cultural practices being followed blindly on the street. The bottom line is that he is clueless about religion; he has no deep understanding. If you ask him what the religion is; he would mention a few cursory things and say that is what religion is. Since such religious practices go along with the oppression and exploitation and the religion cannot solve people's problems, we should leave it.

It is obvious that when someone faces such a logic, his best answer would be, "yes, if you find a system that colludes and cooperates with the oppressor; does not side with the persecuted for a moment; is of no use to the issues of today and tomorrow; then you would also advocate repudiating such a thing wherever you find it; don't accept it for a second." If the religion is from God, such a thing does not happen. The religion God sends is not useless; it has certain hallmarks; it has certain attributes; it has a standard. If such a standard matches with a religion, we will accept that religion. If the match is not there, we will not accept it.

What Is The Religion?

The Holy Qur'an says:

لَقَدْ أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ.

Verily we sent our messengers with clear arguments. (***57:25***)

وَأَنزَلْنَا مَعَهُمُ الْكِتَابَ وَالْمِيزَانَ. And we sent the book and the scale. We sent intellect and means to the people; means that can resolve conflicts between people and make decisions. Why did we do it? رُسُلَنَا. Not just one messenger; not just Moses; not just the last Messenger; not just Jesus.

أَرْسَلْنَا رُسُلَنَا. We sent all messengers with one purpose, one ideology, one goal. What is that goal? لِيَقُومَ النَّاسُ بِالْقِسْطِ. So, the people could live their lives with justice. This is the religion. If you find a religion that is not in line with the philosophy of religions, then either it is not from God or it has been distorted. If you see a religion that is against the philosophy of religion and the path followed by the prophets and messengers, then know that surely it has not come from God and the prophets. It is obvious.

O materialistic person! When you say that religion is incapable of managing the society, what religion have you looked at? Islam? True Islam? Divine revelation of Prophet Muhammad (S)? The ruling style of Imam Ali ('a)? Have you studied them and concluded that they are unable to take care of societal problems? Prove it. What is lacking? Islam came to eliminate unjust discrimination; it negates class differences in the society; it redistributes unevenly distributed wealth on equality basis; it provides resources and opportunities to every human being with justice; it takes the government from human

satans and hands it over to God's just system. It takes a lowly and defeated human being who is willing to enslave others or become a slave of others himself; a human being who does not shrink away from the highest oppression for a good word or a pat on the back or a few coins. It gives this human being honor; elevates him; equips him with moral and human values; and provides a secure environment with a just and strong system.

Religion Or No Religion

The Prophet's (S) training was not individualized. He did not get hold of individuals, sat them down in the corner of a house and said a few words in their ears so they would become good; become human beings. This is not how it was. It was not empty lecture and advice so the Prophet (S) would sit down and lecture people, "O' people this is bad, don't do it; this is good, do it." The Prophet (S) molded the foundation of Islamic society strong like steel in a certain shape and form in that age of ignorance. Then he brought people into this mold and onto this path. Getting onto this path is what led to turning into human beings. If you say that the true religion of Islam that comes with these attributes is not suited for man's progress, justice, peace and provision of livelihood, then we don't accept it. It is not fair.

If an intellectual who grew up with illogical Christianity and has seen nothing but such manifestations of the religion as false intercession by Prophet Jesus, forgiven sins and sale of heaven for money, then it makes sense. But that is history. You are living 100, 80 or 50 years after such a time; today Islam is proving its importance by showing the most beautiful colors on the horizon and the greatest human splendors. You do not have the right to say such a thing about religion anymore. However, if you say that absurd and false religions that appear glamorous on the surface but are filthy on the inside; religions that promote laziness, oppression, conflicts in society and elimination of brotherhood; religions that tell a poor man not to strive for better life and tell a rich man to just give some money to the church so it can absolve him of the atrocities he had committed in earning his wealth; if that is the religion you are talking about, then we are with you and both of us are followers of Qur'an.

يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ آمَنُوا إِنَّ كَثِيرًا مِّنَ الْأَحْبَارِ وَالرُّهْبَانِ لَيَأْكُلُونَ أَمْوَالَ النَّاسِ بِالْبَاطِلِ وَيَصُدُّونَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّـهِ

O' believers! Many Jew and Christian scholars and ascetic people unjustly gobble up people's wealth and don't just stop there; they prevent them from achieving higher station. (***Qur'an, 9:34***)

If only the Jew and Christian scholars had gotten ordinary people's money but not impeded their progress towards the higher rank. This is what Qur'an is saying and we agree with you. Such a religion is not a religion. No religion is better than such a religion because sometimes lack of religiosity does not become a helper of oppression, whereas, a bad religion can become a means, a tool and a weapon.

To summarize, these were a few principles in relation to the belief on Tawhid in the form of an ideology as the answers to the following questions:

- Is there a God?
- Is there a meta-physical world?
- Is there a mighty power?

Our answer is that a Godly person has a certain set of arguments and the worldly person has another set. Let us leave the conflict between the two to the books written on this subject. We have already spoken enough about what was relevant to our discussion.

A very important point is to address some issues related to the Islamic thoughts; everyone should understand them. One of them is that when you present Tawhid, do not describe it as a dry answer to a question of intellect and scholarship; rather it should be portrayed as if it is as important as life is; as if it will define destiny. Let me elaborate.

Worshipping And Knowing God

Suppose you are traveling with a friend on a certain road and you start discussing something. You say that the land on both sides of the road is water-logged and nothing can be cultivated on it. Your friend says, "no Sir, this land is good and that crop will do well on this land." You say one thing and he says another. You bring your argument and he brings his. How important is this discussion? Your car is moving at a speed of 120 km an hour. Neither you are going to test the soil nor you intend to buy the land to grow beetroots; nor you have to answer any legal queries about this land. There is no effect of this discourse. It does not matter who wins the argument. It will not change your route, your motion, your future or your friendship. This is one type of discussion.

There is another scenario. The two of you are traveling in the same car at the same speed on the same road. Suddenly your friend says that he thinks that the road is going north, whereas, your destination is in the south. You say that the road is actually heading south and the two of you have an argument. This discussion has an impact. If he is right, you will have to change the direction of the car. If you are correct, then the car should continue in the same direction. The first effect of this discussion will be that the driver's foot will hit the brakes. This is a fate-changing argument. Discussion on Tawhid is a similar discussion.

The way ordinary people or useless, unaccountable and irresponsible members of the society present Tawhid is different from the one viewed by a responsible individual. An irresponsible and unaccountable person puts forward Tawhid as "Is there a God or no? If He is, then what? If He is not, then what? Is there an impact on life? How will it change the economic system? If there is a God, what will be the effect on the capitalist system of a certain super power? How will the new president of a certain country behave if he believes in one God? How will he act if he does not believe in one God? Will it make a difference?" If faith on either side has no impact on the cartels[4], trusts[5], capitalists and undue

discrimination in society, then such worship of God and faith on Tawhid is similar to the discussion on passing the land. It is useless as it has no impact. What is the benefit in a certain political leader believing in oneness of God, if to him it is only an answer to a dry and intellectual question; nothing beyond that. Believing in unity of God for a political leader, an ordinary person, a society or a group of people is important, effective, useful and life-giving only when Tawhid is adopted for its impact; for the system it establishes; for the life it molds into. All these things should be pondered, understood and internalized.

Normally we think that we should simply keep Tawhid in mind. Such Tawhid will have no effect on our lives; the best will be some bearing on our personal lives but none on the communal life in the society. As a monotheist, I would have the same assets, same car, same business, same factory, same relationship with the worker and the land as I would, being an atheist. If you pick out two capitalists or big traders or industrialists who are masters of their trade from the super powers that are dominating the whole world with their name and fame; suppose one of them is a monotheist and the other a materialist, do you see any difference in their behaviors? The one who believes in God goes to the church on Sundays and pays some coins to the priest to get his sins forgiven and path to heaven leveled. What is the impact of Tawhid on his life; on the working conditions in his factory; on his relationship with his workers and other people; on his pursuit for wealth; on his spending habits? Such monotheism is no different from polytheism.

Islamic Tawhid

The Tawhid Islam calls for, is more than an answer to a question. It is a revelation for the affairs of a government; for societal relationships; for the working of the society; for the objectives of the society; for people's responsibilities; for God's rights; for fellow human beings' rights and for the rights of other things in the world. Islamic Tawhid is a system that starts with A, followed by B and C until it comes to Z. It is not that you say God is one and not two and that is the end of story. God is one and not two implies that there is no ruler other than God in your own existence and in your society.

God is one and not two means that your wealth, your own existence and that of other human beings are all for God. You are simply trustees. Now who is ready to be a monotheist? You are trustees of money; it has been loaned to you. If you are holding somebody's money, you wait for his message for its disposal. He might say, 'Sir, please give ten tomans (Iranian currency) to this child or this old man or this stranger or put ten tomans into this box or just burn ten tomans." You are waiting for the owner's command; aren't you? Is there anything else beyond this? Do you believe in some ownership for yourself in this money? المَالُ مَالُ اللهِ جَعَلَهَاوَدَائِعَ عِندَالناسِ God has given wealth to people as a trust[6]. This is imperative in Tawhid.

If you believe in Tawhid, then classes in society and discrimination mean nothing. A society that has some people in upper rungs and others in lower is not a society of Tawhid. Tawhid says, كُلُّكُم ادَمُ وَادَمُ مِن

تُرَاب. Everyone is a descendent of Adam (‘a) and he was made from clay[7]. Your nearness to God and your rank stems from your God-consciousness (taqwa) and whoever is more observant of God’s command will have a higher station. Otherwise, a society is not based on Tawhid if there are thousands of ways of undue discrimination; a society that has elite and non-elite classes; a society that has a certain segment of people getting much bigger share of wealth than the rest and the ones getting it consider it their right; a society in which all members don’t belong to the same class and that has some people slaves of others. This is not a monotheistic society. When Tawhid comes to a society, everyone gets the same rank. What does it mean? It means that all members of the society will be God’s servants as mentioned before. All existences in the world – humans and others – are in His control and are equal partners in His bondage. We have already stated that there is nothing – children, spouse or affiliation with a certain class – that can take anyone out of the vassalage of God. It does not make any sense that while staying within this bondage a group of servants puts the chain of slavery around the necks of others. Being a servant of God implies freedom from others. Simultaneous servitude of God and someone other than God is an oxymoron.

What Is Slavery?

Rab’i Bin Amer, a messenger of Islamic army, entered the palace of Sassanid king. He was a Bedouin Arab in worn out clothes that may have cost him less than one toman. He entered the palace of a king who while running away from the battlefield had a thousand singing slave girls with him. He had a thousand singing slave girls in his company while traveling; you can imagine what he had while at home. And this traveling was no ordinary travel, he was running for his life. O wretched person! Where are you taking these singers? Take your sword. He was under the influence of Zionist politics. It is an attribute of the despicable Zionist politicians, who busy people with music and other similar useless activities.

The Bedouin entered the court of this great power. Do you think he was nervous? Do you think he was overwhelmed? Do you think he wanted to negotiate? Not at all. After all when an ordinary person confronts a great power, he tries his hardest to develop rapport with the power; he tries to get closer to it through sweet talk, flattery, expression of fear or humility. Do you think such a thing happened? Absolutely not. As he came forward and got closer to the king’s throne, he almost put his foot on the throne because he saw that Yazgard was not coming to get the letter. He had brought a letter that the courtiers came to get from him but he refused; he wanted to give it to the king himself. The king was not getting up to receive the letter so he was forced to go forward himself. He climbed the throne and gave it to him. The king asked, “why did you come?”

He uttered three sentences; three sentences that should be engraved in golden letters and hung on the gate of the great palace of humanity so everyone knows the slogan of Islam and the Islamic ideology. The king asked why he came. The Arab replied: لِنُخرِجَ النَّاسَ مِن عِبَادَةِ العِبَادِاِلیٰ عِبَادَةِ اللہِ We have come to take people out of slavery of other men and take them to the slavery of exalted God.

What is the slavery of men? During one of the battles between Iran and Rome the king of Iran at the time ordered every citizen to join the troops. An old man came to him and pleaded that three of his sons were joining the army and if the king would leave his fourth son back to take care of the aging father. The king did not say anything at the time and just pushed the old man out of the crowd.

Next day the army was marching in four rows. When they arrived at the gate, the three brothers noticed that their fourth brother was split into two – half of the body hanging inside the gate and the other half outside. Why? So, no other old man would have the courage to ask reprieve for his sons from joining the king's army. This is slavery of other men.

When the members of a society do not have the right to like something that they desire; when people do not have the right to favor and demand justice; be against undue discrimination; be freedom lovers and ask for it; when they are living in a society where they are forced to accept an environment of silence and suffocation as normal and endorse it, this is the worst and most bitter kind of slavery. Why? This is hypocrisy and deception. Some people used to go to certain places to capture a few innocent individuals, have their heads shaved and then sell them in other cities as slaves. This was done out in the open. However, playing with people in such a way and ignoring their wishes, intentions and decisions is nothing but hypocrisy and deception.

Rab'i Bin Amer said, "O' Yazdgard! we have come to release men out of your slavery; to relieve them from worshipping you, your governors in far flung areas, local rulers and the army officers." مِن عِبَادَةِ العِبَاد.

Then where to take them?

They were not your slaves; so, what state should they be in?

Should they remain totally free?

No, they should be servants of God. Being a servant of God is freedom; it is being the boss; it is moving towards perfection. This is the way it was in the Islamic society. People were servants of God and not of other powers in an Islamic society. It was still true even when the Islamic society had deteriorated and was not following 100% Islam. Even in those years when Iran was being conquered, people were still under the influence of training by the Prophet (S) and the Qur'an. A political ruler announced from the podium, "if I go astray, straighten me out." An Arab Bedouin stood up from the crowd and yelled, "if you go astray, our swords will make you straight." Did the army and police attack him? Did they incarcerate him for disturbing the environment? Did they finish him off? Of course, not. The Arab was right and logical. Freedom does not mean dictatorship. Freedom implies following the righteous human law so that a man is not forced to lift the burden of another man and the society; even the burden of the ruler is not acceptable. If the ruler said something from God based on revelation, then he is an Islamic ruler and what he says, will be accepted. If it is not based on revelation from God, it will be thrown against the wall.

Tawhid And Its Manifestation

لِنُخرِجَ النَّاسَ مِن عِبَادَةِ العِبَادِ اِلیٰ عِبَادَةِ اللہِ وَمِن ضیقِ الدُّنیَا اِلیٰ سَعَۃِ الدُّنیَا وَالاٰخَرَۃِ. We have come to free people – the servants of God – from their limited and narrow sphere and take them to the vastness of this world and the hereafter. Limited and tight sphere of this world! A society where people do not spend their lives under the right ideology; wherever they look they find nothing but this world and the worldly interests; they only see worldly pleasures and desires. A man, as hard as he looks, only finds his petty animalistic struggles and ordinary, trivial, immediate and short-lasting benefits. When Yazdgard ruled, it was not that everyone in the society was happy with him. Many were angry with him. However, these unhappy people were short-sighted; their vision was narrow and small. They thought that if they expressed their displeasure with Yazdgard, their paltry belongings will be taken away from them. They may lose eating a couple of morsels, sleeping longer on a few occasions and playing around a little more on the streets. And since all this was very important to them, they loved these petty things and were unwilling to take any steps for freedom and higher human values. What was the reason for it? They had a very limited vision ضیقِ الدُّنیَا only this world.

However, when a man reverts to Islam, everything is a prelude for him; it is a means for him. To what? To reach an unlimited world (I am not talking about life after death); to a world of man's own thoughts and ideology that are enormous and spread out with the vastness of God. Everything is a channel for the man to achieve God's pleasure. Life, wealth, comforts and love of this world don't mean much to him. They are important to him when they are in God's way. فِی سَبِیلِ اللہ. But if this love, wealth, status, assets and children are not in God's way and duty, then they carry no value and importance to him. This world and the hereafter are connected in the Islamic creed and there is no end to this world for a Muslim. For him this world is vast and he thinks of death as a window through which he looks out at gardens, a bunch of worlds, and galaxies; unlike someone who is a slave of others and petty things and thinks of this world as limited, This is why the true Muslim tries to get close to the window; it does not bother him to through it; death does not unsettle him.

These are a few facets and manifestations of Tawhid. However, there should be more organized discourse under clearer topics and God-permitting we will do that later. At this point I wanted to present some principles. As a matter of fact, it is a new approach to Tawhid. It is the correct slant to Tawhid. However, there are other angles and views that have not been brought up and God-permitting we hope to put them together in the next few days. In any case, whatever has been discussed is one aspect of Tawhid that presents what is viewed by other religions and specifically Qur'an relevant to Tawhid.

Punishment From God

Now let us talk about the verses under discussion today. Ayatul Kursi carries signs of Tawhid and reciting it repeatedly is very interesting. And in my opinion the strong emphasis on repeating it many times is to keep the signs of Tawhid alive in one's mind all the time. حی وقیوم should stay in front of a

person. These verses are from Surah Al-Baqarah[8]. They present one of the scenes of the judgment day that is very relevant to Tawhid. It will become clear as we go through the verses.

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ اللَّـهِ أَندَادًا There are some people who declare others to be like Allah. They choose entities other than God to be His partners or competitors; in other words, they select partners for God from humans or other creation. يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّـهِ. They love them as they should love God. Here the verse starts a parenthesis since there was no mention of love but when love for God was mentioned a parenthesis was added as if this was a controversial sentence. وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِّلَّـه All love of believers is for God. But the true believers love God immensely; more than they love the superficial attractions, the magnets that are pulling them, the false gods, the gods of lust and the rulers of the society.

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِّلَّـهِ ۗ وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّـهِ جَمِيعًا

All the love of believers is for God. It would have been better if the losers had understood what they would after seeing the punishment that all might belongs to Allah only. (***Qur'an, 2:165***)

Suddenly the focus shifts to a scene from the day of judgement when all creation will be gathered. Non-believers, the wicked, servants of those other than God, God's servants and everything expected to come on that day that has been reported or not reported, are present. Means of God's wrath and His mercy are in place as well. However, you and I cannot truly comprehend the state of these means. We cannot understand in this world how the affairs will be in the next. Basically, we know that the things needed for punishment and retribution will be ready. Both good and bad servants of God will be there. Then the oppressors in this world will see all might in the hands of God on the day of judgement. It would be quite peculiar.

After all, as you see in this world, everyone has some power. Everyone is doing something. The ones in the upper echelon have more power, but even those in the lower ranks have some influence. They are all proud of their power. Everyone has authority to some extent; he can do something. Especially, the oppressor with a higher status has a lot of dominance. The oppressor who worships another oppressor thinks that he also has some sway as he has connected himself to a bigger authority just like the fox that tied its tail to that of the camel.[9] It is the state of this world.

However, when they gather on the day of judgement, everyone will look inside him and notice that he has no power, no energy and no capability; all the power is in the hands of God.

الْمُلْكُ الْيَوْمَ ۗ لِلَّـهِ الْوَاحِدِ الْقَهَّارِ To whom does the sovereignty belong today? To God, the One, the Irresistible.[10] When the oppressor who oppressed others and the oppressor who oppressed himself by being a slave of the first oppressor will look around, they will notice that this world is strange; all the talk, the arrogance, the palaces and worldly things come to naught.

It will be a rather odd sight. Look at two groups. One group worshipped the other; i.e., obeyed them

unconditionally. These two groups will face each other. They will quarrel and argue with each other. وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ When those who committed oppression by kneeling in front of someone other than God, will look at the punishment. أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّـهِ جَمِيعًا. All might belongs to God. وَأَنَّ اللَّـهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ God's punishment is severe and deadly. They will repent for the deeds they did in their lives and for becoming slaves of the oppressors who will be powerless on the day of judgement. إِذْ تَبَرَّأَ الَّذِينَ اتُّبِعُوا مِنَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا وَرَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ. At that time the leaders will express their revulsion towards their followers and the punishment will be in their faces. As an example, Yazdgard might say, "O' God These people served me, I loathe them. Not that I did not like it at the time, but they were wrong in calling me Your partner." Now you can imagine how perturbed Yazdgard's courtiers will be that they handed over their world and the hereafter to this crook and now on the day of judgement he wants to stay away from them. وَتَقَطَّعَتْ بِهِمُ الْأَسْبَابُ. And all of their means will be cut off. وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا. And the followers will say.لَوْ أَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةً فَنَتَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُمْ كَمَا تَبَرَّءُوا مِنَّا. If we could just go back to our previous lives, we would show our revulsion towards them, the way they are showing it towards us today.

كَذَٰلِكَ يُرِيهِمُ اللَّـهُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ حَسَرَاتٍ عَلَيْهِمْ. This is how God will expose their deeds as a source of repentance. وَمَا هُم بِخَارِجِينَ مِنَ النَّارِ And there is no way for them to get out of the fire.

The highlight of this verse is that those who are being humiliated in this world are receiving their shame due to worshipping someone other than God; they have become their servants and slaves instead of God. This is what goes against Tawhid.

Supplement

Qur'an does not present Tawhid as a random and irresponsible philosophy. It is a vigorous and dependable ideology that is effective in setting the goals of a society, managing the society and safeguarding its elements. In other words, Tawhid is an Islamic ideology.

The connection between man and the Great Power (God) implies that the universe has been created for a purpose and it is the responsibility of the man to use all his faculties and will power to get on the right path for achieving this goal; he should identify this goal and the path in spite of lacking desire.

Since God created this universe and has total control over it, it is imperative that He makes the laws and implements them and every creation (sensible creation for whom laws can be devised) must obey those laws.

The infinite knowledge of God dictates that organization of man-made laws should depend on that knowledge.

The vassalage of all creation to God dictates that no man can have the right to rule over other servants of God. Only those who have been chosen by God can manage the affairs of human life such as the Prophets, Imams, Angels and the Islamic rulers during the occultation of the Last Imam.

Reflection on the following verses will illuminate the Islamic outlook about Tawhid.

Surah Al-Baqarah (2), Verse 165-167:

وَمِنَ النَّاسِ مَن يَتَّخِذُ مِن دُونِ اللَّـهِ أَندَادًا. ***There are some, who declare others to be like Allah.***

يُحِبُّونَهُمْ كَحُبِّ اللَّـهِ. ***And they love them as they should love Allah.***

وَالَّذِينَ آمَنُوا أَشَدُّ حُبًّا لِّلَّـهِ. ***Whereas, all the love of believers is only for Allah.***

وَلَوْ يَرَى الَّذِينَ ظَلَمُوا إِذْ يَرَوْنَ الْعَذَابَ. ***Only if the oppressors had seen earlier what they will after seeing the punishment.***

أَنَّ الْقُوَّةَ لِلَّـهِ جَمِيعًا. ***That all might lies with Allah.***

وَأَنَّ اللَّـهَ شَدِيدُ الْعَذَابِ. ***And Allah is the One to give the most severe punishment.***

إِذْ تَبَرَّأَ الَّذِينَ اتُّبِعُوا. ***At that time the leaders will express their revulsion towards their followers.***

مِنَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا. ***Leaders from their followers***

وَرَأَوُا الْعَذَابَ. ***And the punishment will be on them all***

وَتَقَطَّعَتْ بِهِمُ الْأَسْبَابُ. ***And there will be no means left***

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اتَّبَعُوا. ***And the followers will say***

لَوْ أَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةً فَنَتَبَرَّأَ مِنْهُمْ كَمَا تَبَرَّءُوا مِنَّا. ***If only we also had loathed them the way they are hating us today***

كَذَٰلِكَ يُرِيهِمُ اللَّـهُ أَعْمَالَهُمْ حَسَرَاتٍ عَلَيْهِم. ***Allah will present all their deeds as the source of repentance***

وَمَا هُم بِخَارِجِينَ مِنَ النَّارِ. ***And none of them is getting out of hell***

1. Democritus (370–460 BC) was a famous Greek philosopher. He said that everything was made of little indivisible particles called atoms. He did not believe in the soul and considered it a product of the mind. His thinking was that the only existence was atom or matter; this is why he is called a materialist.
2. Materialism is a vision of the universe that refutes everything related to metaphysics and equates existence to matter.
3. Qur'an, 45:24
4. A group of companies that make a product and split the market by agreeing on certain production levels and price thus establishing a monopoly.
5. having a certain share in the trust; all resources are under the trust's control.
6. Biharul Anwar, book of Al'ashara, chapters on rights of believers, chapter 78
7. Biharul Anwar, book of faith and infidelity, chapters Almakarimul Akhlaq, chapter 56
8. Qur'an, 2:165, 166
9. Connecting oneself to quality-less elders
10. Qur'an, 40:16

Third Speech: Worship And Submission Based On God

بِسْمِ اللَّـهِ الرَّحْمَـٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

هُنَالِكَ تَبْلُو كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا أَسْلَفَتْ ۚ وَرُدُّوا إِلَى اللَّـهِ مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقِّ ۖ وَضَلَّ عَنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ قُلْ مَن

يَرْزُقُكُم مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ أَمَّن يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ وَمَن يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ وَمَن يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ ۚ فَسَيَقُولُونَ اللَّـهُ ۚ فَقُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ

There will every soul prove **(*the fruits of*)** ***the deeds it sent before: they will be brought back to Allah their rightful Lord, and their invented falsehoods will leave them in the lurch. Say: "Who is it that sustains you*** **(*in life*)** ***from the sky and from the earth? or who is it that has power over hearing and sight? And who is it that brings out the living from the dead and the dead from the living? and who is it that rules and regulates all affairs?" They will soon say, "Allah". Say, "will ye not then show piety*** **(*to Him*)*?"*** **(*Qur'an, 10:30-31*)**

Tawhid – An Identity

As we have said, there is a long and detailed discussion on Tawhid in Qur'an. It can be stated that the longest and most detailed discussion on any subject in Qur'an is on Tawhid; even longer than the discourse on Prophethood which by itself is quite long with stories of Prophets and various occurrences that have been presented to learn lessons from. The way Tawhid, presence of God and, especially, negation of polytheism have been portrayed in certain instances in Qur'an is unique from both presentation style and number of verses point of view. Although the number of issues related to Tawhid goes up due to the enormity of discussion, we will discuss only a few with validation from certain verses instead of all the problems related to Tawhid.

We think if we accept that in addition to being an ideology and a cognizance based on reality, Tawhid is a notion that is a motivator for action and gives direction to life. (These are some concepts that have been explained in the past few days.) If we accept that Tawhid is a faith that has commitment and accountability as its integral part, then we will need to look for the commitment – the responsibility that is associated with Tawhid; and look for it in Qur'an and other Islamic sources. I ask all brothers and sisters who still remember the context for this discussion and I believe most do, to concentrate on the words

and phrases I am using and understand them correctly.

Tawhid is a belief that brings commitment and responsibility with it. We need to understand and find out what the responsibility and commitment are.

Is our responsibility limited to having a belief on our tongue or in our heart and mind? In other words, is having the belief our only responsibility?

Or the sphere of responsibility crosses the boundaries of thought and puts a chain of responsibilities on the shoulders of a monotheist person to fulfill the demands of Tawhid. Or is it limited to obligatory prayers or making sure not to slaughter a sheep without reciting God's Name or similar other things? Or no; the responsibility Tawhid gives to a monotheist person and a monotheist society includes society's most important, the most comprehensive and the most basic concerns. What are they?

Monotheist Society

Governance, economy, international relations and relationships among people are the most important fundamental rights for running and sustaining a society. Our belief is that the responsibility and accountability on a monotheist's shoulders relevant to Tawhid stem from these basic rights and responsibilities.

Let me state it in one sentence so we could get into more detailed discourse. The shape and structure of a monotheist society is different from that of an atheist society. It is not that if we take a single law or a set of laws from the monotheist society and implement in an atheist society, the latter will turn into a monotheist society. No. The dimensions of a monotheist society, the interaction between the components of such a society and the common pieces of such a society built on Tawhid and monotheism are totally different from those of a different society. This is a comparison of communal systems.

The communal system of a monotheist society is totally different from and probably opposite to that of an atheist society. You should analyze the next sentence. The discourse and discussion related to the communal system and the dimensions and pieces of a society can be understood with help from the modern civilization and more so from Qur'an and Traditions. This is universal.

We present Tawhid as a declaration that has certain articles. We will describe the articles one by one. Just the way there is an agreement after negotiations between two people, groups or factions in the form of a binding resolution, the monotheists of the world are bound by their Lord to act on the Tawhid resolution. The first article of this declaration should become clear in today's verses. By the principle of Tawhid men do not have the right to serve or obey any person or thing other than God. This is the first principle. When we said any person or thing, it covers a large spectrum. Let us see where servitude and obedience apply.

أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَن لَّا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ.

O' Children of Adam! Did I not get a commitment from you not to worship Satan? (***Qur'an, 36:60***)

Satan – Broad Concept

Did I not get a commitment from you not to worship Satan, O Children of Adam? In discussing worship of Satan and about Satan we have explained that Iblis is not the only Satan or it is not something that is hidden and cannot be touched. It can possibly come at any point in a man's life.

Satan is a broad and generally known concept. It denotes such powers that are outside a man and are trouble makers. Just like if we define the man's essence (one that is a companion, servant, agent and partner of Satan), we can say that it refers to the trouble making powers inside a man's existence. The essence consisting of wicked desires is inside a man's existence and Satan is outside. These are both mischief-creating powers. Both create sedition. Satan is everything that is outside you and creates hindrances in your path; makes trouble; turns into a wolf or creates wolves and robbers. This is Satan.

In this series of reciting and contemplating gracious Qur'anic verses when we come to the discussion about Prophethood, then we will translate this verse. "Satans from humans and jinns were the enemies of all the prophets sent by God."

وَكَذَٰلِكَ جَعَلْنَا لِكُلِّ نَبِيٍّ عَدُوًّا شَيَاطِينَ الْإِنسِ وَالْجِنِّ.

And we have a satan enemy from humans and jinns for every prophet. (***Qur'an, 6:112***)

However, we will clarify later who these satans were; what kind of people they were; what groups and classes they belonged to and the reason for their animosity. Satan is a generally known entity.

أَن لَّا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ. What does it mean? Do not worship these miscreant powers. Do not obey them. And this is Tawhid. When I say "this is Tawhid", it does not imply that this is all Tawhid is. No. It is only part of it. Tawhid has its fine details; it has other angles and components; some of them we may discuss later. Not obeying such powers; not worshipping them and not accepting forcefully imposed things is one part of Tawhid.

There is a tradition that I have related in different contexts and this is a good opportunity to read it again. It is related to Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir ('a) in our reliable books including Usul Al-Kafi. [1]

وَلَاَعُذِّبَنَّ كُلَّ رَعِيَّة فِی الاِسلَامِ دَانَت بِوَلَايَةِ كُلِّ اِمَام جَائِرلَيسَ مِنَ اللهِ وَاِن كَانَتِ الرَّعِيَّةُ فِی اَعمَالِهَابَرَّةَ تَقِيَّة وَلَاَعفُوَنَّ عَن كُلِّ رَعِيَّة فِی الاِسلَامِ دَانَت بِوِلَايَةِ كُلِّ اِمَام عَادِل مِنَ اللهِ وَاِن كَانَت الرَّعِيَّةُ فِی اَنفُسِهَا ظَالِمةُ مُسِيئَة

Instead of literal translation of the tradition let me give you the gist. Obeying a power not sent by God or one that does not represent God or obeying a center of power that is not aligned with the center of God's Powers, all fall within the boundaries of polytheism. The reason is that those involved in this activity are stricken with a colossal collective ailment. Even though in their personal affairs they may be wonderful and organized people. بَرَّةَ تَقِيَّة . God-conscious, pious and caring. Yet, this disease becomes the cause of Exalted God removing His kindness and blessing from this nation and subjecting them to punishment.

Man's Perfection

Submission and worship of someone other than God is not in conformity with the goal for which God created human being; it is against man's achieving perfection and loftiness; it is against his freedom and non-affiliation – such freedom and non-affiliation that is the preamble to his upward ascent. If a man is not free and is incarcerated, he cannot fly to his desired destination; he cannot reach the high station God has set for him. He is like a plant that has been covered or a plant that has a strong wire tied to the bottom of its trunk thus stopping its growth. Such a plant cannot flourish and cannot bear fruit; then what is the point of having such a plant? Why does it exist? Did it have a purpose other than bearing fruit? Obeying and worshipping someone other than God is a similar affliction. In any case, there are several verses in Qur'an in this context. I came across these verses without much or little search so I mentioned them here.

Now let us revert to our original topic. We should be familiar with the presentation style of Qur'an in relation to Tawhid. In the process of understanding Islam we have moved far away from Qur'an or we have become engrossed in ordinary and puny thoughts that are shallow and baseless; and are full of rubbish. This is why, thoughts that were apparently attractive, yet shallow on the inside, could not compete with the waves of materialism and collapsed in front of our eyes. Or we got entangled in such logic related to Tawhid that was dry, lackluster, ineffective and incapable of inculcating a sense of responsibility.

Formation Of A Monotheist Society

Such dry and ineffective philosophical discussions! The theologians have debated Tawhid so much and yet these discussions have been futile in the formation and evolution of the monotheistic society. If a life related problem is discussed for a hundred years, is it possible that it would leave no impression on life? They chatted for centuries in a manner that was empty, dry, apparently attractive, yet lifeless on the inside, and out of touch with real life. However, today when we want to get help from Tawhid for the development of a new life and look at these discussions, we find them irrelevant.

We find nothing useful in these discussions. Instead, we should turn to Qur'an and take Tawhid from Qur'an. Qur'an has presented different angles of Tawhid, its components and its style in hundreds of verses very eloquently. We will find what a monotheistic life is and what a monotheistic person is.

Tawhid – A Life-Shaper

We need to ponder over the verses about Tawhid. Now I will translate a few for you.

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا

The day we will gather all creation. (***Qur'an, 10:28-32***)

This is a reference to the Day of Judgment. ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا. Then we will say to those who associated. مَكَانَكُمْ أَنتُمْ وَشُرَكَاؤُكُمْ. Stay in your places, you and your associate-gods. This is in the tone of a command and wrath. Stop in your tracks, you and your imaginative associate-gods – the ones you proclaimed equal and rival to God. مَكَانَكُمْ أَنتُمْ وَشُرَكَاؤُكُمْ ۚ فَزَيَّلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ. We will create split between them and their associate-gods.

The associates being addressed are neither the idols – Hubal2, Manaat, Laat, Uzza or a certain statue in Rome – nor calves of Hinduism. They are not human beings and cannot be told to stop.

We are talking about a man who has been selected to be a rival or associate of God. He will be told to stop.

The first furious command that negates the powers of associate-gods is this one. "Stop". Imagine the impact it will have. Anyone who has been picked to be a rival of God by an Arab polytheist or non-Arab Polytheist, Iranian or Roman, African or Indian or Egyptian will face this situation. He and his followers will hear the enraged command and stop.

فَزَيَّلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ. We will cause split between them. وَقَالَ شُرَكَاؤُهُم مَّا كُنتُمْ إِيَّانَا تَعْبُدُونَ. The so-called Allah's partners or rivals will say to their followers, "It was not us that you worshipped". They will behave like criminals who try to get rid of the crimes from their necks by using various excuses.

وَقَالَ الَّذِينَ اسْتُضْعِفُوا لِلَّذِينَ اسْتَكْبَرُوا بَلْ مَكْرُ اللَّيْلِ وَالنَّهَارِ.

The subjects will tell their leaders, "Those were your treacheries day and night." (***Qur'an, 34:33***)

Those groups who were competing in ignorance will face off on the day of judgement and quarrel with each other. The followers who declared associates of God will want to grab the associate by the neck, throw him on the ground and say, "I accepted you in place of God and now I am in such trouble". And the one who was worshipped in the world will be ready to rebuff his followers of the world to protect his own destiny. مَّا كُنتُمْ إِيَّانَا تَعْبُدُونَ. You did not worship us. فَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّـهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ. God is enough as a witness between us.إِن كُنَّا عَنْ عِبَادَتِكُمْ لَغَافِلِينَ. We did not know that you were worshipping us. We did not notice that you looked at us for worshipping and slavery. This is the associates' talk.

هُنَالِكَ تَبْلُو كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا أَسْلَفَتْ. At that time everyone will examine their past deeds.

وَرُدُّوا إِلَى اللَّـهِ مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقِّ. Everyone will be reverted to their Lord, Who is their real Owner and Supporter.

وَضَلَّ عَنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ. They will forget what they used to slander. They will fail to remember what used to motivate them for obeying associate-gods. All the reasons and excuses for worshipping associate-gods that they thought will help them on the day of judgement will be taken away from them.

To justify his polytheism a man drums up an excuse – even a legal (shar'ai) and appropriate one. He wants to count those excuses on the day of judgment but finds out that he has nothing; all his excuses are worthless. وَضَلَّ عَنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ. What he depended on in the world – his excuses and his associate-gods – are of no help on this day in removing the burden from his shoulders. Alas. Poor fellow!

Tawhid – Motivator For Action

Let us study Qur'anic style for making a case. It does not emphasize presenting logic. It creates an environment that induces man to come up with logic himself. In the ensuing verses God wants to prove that only He should be obeyed and worshipped. He says:

> قُلْ مَن يَرْزُقُكُم مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ.

O' Messenger! Ask them who gives them nourishment from the earth and the sky. (***Qur'an, 10:31***)

Life-giving water from the sky and nourishing matter from the earth. أَمَّن يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ. Who owns the faculties of listening and seeing? Don't think of listening (sam'a) as ears. Ear is the name of a certain organ. It is called gosh in Farsi and uzun in Arabic. Sam'a is the state and capability of listening. As an example, if someone's ears are cut off, you won't say that his sam'a has been cut off. What you say is that his ears have been cut off. Same applies to basar (seeing). It is not eyes or chashm in Farsi. Basar is soul and eyes are body. Even if the eye is called basar, it is called basar due to the existence of the seeing capability. As an example, a non-seeing eye cannot be called basar. أَمَّن يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ. Who has control over the capabilities of listening and seeing? Who has given you these faculties? Who can take them away from you? As a matter of fact, this verse is hinting at the man's thinking capability so he can answer the question, "is he the owner of listening and seeing faculties?"

> وَمَن يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ.

Who is it that brings out life from the dead?(***Qur'an, 30:19***)

Apparently alive from apparently dead. As an example, a woman dies during pregnancy, her living child

is extracted from her dead body. Similarly, the apparently dead sperm yields life. The earth itself is dead, even though it is a treasure of thousands of life-giving and nourishing elements. What is the real source and base of human beings except the nourishing material that comes from the earth? These are some acceptable suggestions about the meaning of this verse. They are also signs of the Lord's might.

وَمَن يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ. Who is it that does the planning of this universe's core system?

Who is it that puts the gravitational force inside the earth so humans can live on it?

Who is it that puts resources for life inside the earth, the ocean and the mountains as a trust?

Who is it that gives the man capability to extract these resources?

Who is that brings this sun, the moon, the stars and the far away world into a presence with amazing order?

Who is it that keeps the moon at a measured distance from the earth? If it was any farther, humans could not live on the earth as the oceans would cover the whole earth. And if it was any closer, humans could not live on the earth as there would be no water on the surface; it would have all gone down into the depths of the earth.

Who is it that made the sun and keeps it at a certain distance from the earth? If it was any closer, heat and any farther, cold would make life unbearable on the earth. And other similar examples.

What can be said about God's immaculate work and His divine power! So many books have been written in this century by the scientists and there are so many things that if a speaker like me wants, he can stand here for several days to relate them. I am not in favor of doing that.

وَمَن يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ. Who is it that runs the affairs of this universe?

This question was put to the polytheists at the time of revelation and it is still pertinent to you and I.

Who is it that runs this universe – from atoms to the depths of the far away worlds? He is the one Who runs it all single-handedly.

Who is it? Ponder without any bias or personal interest and with full focus so you could arrive at the right answer.

فَسَيَقُولُونَ اللَّـهُ. They will say, "Allah". Some people just say "Allah" without thinking about it; it is part of their faith now and it was in the early times. I muse over it, think over it and then say "it is Allah". The stunning orderliness of this created world is from God. It is His hand that is driving this vehicle. Whatever we see with our physical or metaphysical eyes and what we do not see but will see after a few decades due to the progress in knowledge, is nothing but the creation of God's divine power.

Now that there is a God, فَقُلْ say. Grab them by their collar O Our Prophet! “O Broadcaster of Our glad tidings! O the one responsible for taking man to spiritual loftiness! Say. أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ. Why don’t you embrace God-consciousness and piety?

What is this? You are not fearful of the Great God! You set Him aside and obey someone else; you find someone else as His partner for worshipping.

You see if the creation of this universe is in His hands then why should lawmaking for this universe not be in His hands? There was a time when I used to explain Surah Mulk at Masjid al-Karamat (famous mosque in Mashhad). Do you remember?

تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ وَهُوَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ . الَّذِي خَلَقَ الْمَوْتَ وَالْحَيَاةَ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا

Blessed be He in Whose hands is Dominion; and He over all things hath Power. He Who created Death and Life, that He may try which of you is best in deed: and He is the Exalted in Might, Oft-Forgiving. (***Qur’an, 57: 1-2***)

Then we discussed the creation of the universe, skies and the earths. However, what is the beginning? تَبَارَكَ الَّذِي بِيَدِهِ الْمُلْكُ. Government or power is in His hands. What power? The power of creation is with Him. The power of law-making is also with Him. One Who bestows existence to this universe, why would He relinquish law-making to someone else?

And that someone else is created by Him. The One Who made the physical laws for the universe and the man and established practices, would He entrust the job of making civil laws and laws for reward and punishment to weak people, poor intellects, little knowledge and weak will of the man? Why?

Why would He not run the society Himself?

Why would He not make the laws Himself?

Why would He not assign someone to oversee and protect the law and support him?

Why not have Imamat and Wilayat?

Why not appoint an Imam?

Why not appoint a Guardian?

Why assign to people’s poor intellects?

فَذَٰلِكُمُ اللَّـهُ رَبُّكُمُ الْحَقُّ ۖ فَمَاذَا بَعْدَ الْحَقِّ إِلَّا الضَّلَالُ ۖ فَأَنَّىٰ تُصْرَفُونَ

It is the same Allah Who is the truth and He nourishes you; there is only dishonor on leaving the truth; then where are you being carried away? (***Qur'an, 10:32***)

We did not mention two or three verses that we did not wish to focus on. However, you can study them in Qur'an along with translation. Now we arrive at the fourth verse.

O Prophet! Talk to them again for their guidance and edification. Say:

قُلْ هَلْ مِن شُرَكَائِكُم مَّن يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ.

Is there of your partners (***whom you ascribe unto Allah***) ***one that leads to the Truth? How then are ye turned away?*** (***Qur'an, 10:34***)

It is certain that idols, stone, wood and similar articles are not being referred here. No one thought they would guide people. It is obvious that it is the live idols being referred to here. Those who had command or power or religion or some other worldly thing such as Pharaoh or Qadhi Sharih or other similar characters.

قُلْ هَلْ مِن شُرَكَائِكُم مَّن يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ. Is there of your partners (whom you ascribe unto Allah) one that leads to the Truth? What is the answer of the polytheists? It is possible that they would say, "Yes, the ones we have chosen are absolute truth in themselves; they do more than guiding towards truth." This is why their answer has not been reported. This is rubbish. They are wrong about their ascribed partners to God providing guidance. You respond to them by saying,

قُلِ اللَّهُ يَهْدِي لِلْحَقِّ. Say, it is Allah Who leads people and intellects to the truth. Why? Because God has created the truth; He understands the intricacies of the truth and invites people to the truth. Anyone who opposes God invariably invites towards something other than the truth. So it is only God Who invites towards the truth.

Success Of Man

Now we know that God invites towards the truth and the imaginary competitors do not do it.

أَفَمَن يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ. This is a conclusion one ought to reach by using the God given intellect. أَفَمَن يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَن يُتَّبَعَ أَمَّن لَّا يَهِدِّي إِلَّا أَن يُهْدَىٰ. Is One Who guides towards the truth more deserving of being obeyed? Or Someone who cannot find the path himself and needs someone else to hold his hand.

After all, who should be followed? Should we follow God Who created the truth and the leaders who could lead us to the truth?

Or should we follow someone who himself needs hand holding to get somewhere? Blind leads the blind.

جاهل برومرشدبی معرفت چه فیض

کوری کجاعصاکش کوری دگرشود

O’ ignorant! What will you gain from your mentor who has no knowledge? A blind cannot lead the blind.[3]

Does he want to guide us? He himself needs guidance and someone will do that. Who do you think we are talking about? Can this ascribed partner provide any guidance to people or can he not? If he wishes to be guided, someone will need to escort him. What kind of a person can this ascribed partner be? Is it the cow of the cow-worshipping Hindus or the idols worshipped by pagan Qureshis or others? Or is it the sacred fire of the Zoroastrians? Or is it the idols in synagogues of Jews or idol-temples of Rome and Greece?

For sure it is none of those. It is a person who may or not be able to lead. If he needs guidance, he will be directed. He is someone who alleges to be the leader. He claims that he can take the society to spiritual success.

Qur’an says that God takes a man to spiritual loftiness. God leads man to the source of truth; He guides man to the reality. Those who don’t have anything of their own, cannot do such a thing. أَمَّن لَّا يَهِدِّي إِلَّا أَن يُهْدَىٰ ۖ فَمَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ. What is the matter with you? O’ people who don’t ponder and understand. What sort of a command do you give? How can you think of accommodating someone other than God? This is one of the things about Tawhid.

Tawhid is denial of worshipping God imitators. God imitators are people who impersonate God; they think they are gods. Tawhid is negation of man’s living idols; these idols may be under the garb of religious scholars, worldly powers, elite of the society or the rich in the society.

Islam made a proposal to the people of the book (Christians, Jews) as mentioned in the Qur’an. The proposal was about rejection of obedience to ungodly powers as the verse says:

قُل يَاهلَ الكِتبِ تَعَالَواإِلى كَلِمةٍ سَوَا بيَنَنَا وَبَينَكُما لَّا نَعبُدَ اِلَّا اللهَ وَلَا نُشرِک بِہ شَيا وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعضُنَا بَعضا اَربَابا مِّن دُونِ اللهِ. O’ Messenger! Say, “O’ People of the Book! Let us agree on a just word that we will not worship anyone other than God; we will not ascribe partners to Him and we will not elevate anyone amongst ourselves to the station of God.”

Supplement

To summarize we learnt that in addition to being a philosophical ideology, Tawhid is a practical and life-forming identity. In other words, it is a faith essential for formulating the individual and communal life of a man.

Now we will present a few segments of the material on Tawhid in Qur'an.

Based on the foundation of real Tawhid, men have no right to obey and worship anyone other than God. In the history of mankind all the commands given by the mighty and all oppressive acts were against the truth. This statement covers all idols, different gods, God–impersonators and rebellious carnal desires.

The following verses address all who have been ascribed as partners to God; they may be humans or non–humans and this is the complete picture of Tawhid.

Surah Yunus(10), Verses 28–31:

وَيَوْمَ نَحْشُرُهُمْ جَمِيعًا. ***The day we will gather them all.***

ثُمَّ نَقُولُ لِلَّذِينَ أَشْرَكُوا مَكَانَكُمْ أَنتُمْ وَشُرَكَاؤُكُمْ. ***And then we will tell the polytheists that they and their ascribed partners to God should stay and wait in their places.***

فَزَيَّلْنَا بَيْنَهُمْ. ***And then we will split them.***

وَقَالَ شُرَكَاؤُهُم مَّا كُنتُمْ إِيَّانَا تَعْبُدُونَ. ***And the ascribed partners will tell the followers, "it was not us that you used to worship".***

فَكَفَىٰ بِاللَّـهِ شَهِيدًا بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَكُمْ إِن كُنَّا عَنْ عِبَادَتِكُمْ لَغَافِلِينَ. ***Now God is sufficient as a witness between you and us that we certainly knew nothing about you worshipping us.***

هُنَالِكَ تَبْلُو كُلُّ نَفْسٍ مَّا أَسْلَفَتْ. ***At that time everyone will examine his past deeds.***

وَرُدُّوا إِلَى اللَّـهِ مَوْلَاهُمُ الْحَقِ. ***And everyone will be reverted to their rightful Lord.***

وَضَلَّ عَنْهُم مَّا كَانُوا يَفْتَرُونَ. ***And their invented falsehoods will leave them.***

قُلْ مَن يَرْزُقُكُم مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ. ***Say, "who provides you sustenance from the heaven and the earth?"***

قُلْ مَن يَرْزُقُكُم مِّنَ السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ. ***Who owns your hearing and sight?***

أَمَّن يَمْلِكُ السَّمْعَ وَالْأَبْصَارَ. ***Who brings forth the living from the dead and the dead from the living?***

وَمَن يُخْرِجُ الْحَيَّ مِنَ الْمَيِّتِ وَيُخْرِجُ الْمَيِّتَ مِنَ الْحَيِّ. ***And who is it that brings out the living from the dead and the dead from the living?***

وَمَن يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ. ***And who manages the affairs?***

فَسَيَقُولُونَ اللَّـه. ***They will say, "Allah".***

أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ. ***Say, "will you not then be afraid of Allah's punishment?"***

And then after a few verses Qur'an brings the subject closer to the living idols.

Surah Yunus (10), Verse 35:

قُلْ هَلْ مِن شُرَكَائِكُم مَّن يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ. ***Say, "Is there any one from your associate-gods who guides to the truth?"***

قُلِ اللَّـهُ يَهْدِي لِلْحَقِ. ***Say, "Allah guides to the truth.***

أَفَمَن يَهْدِي إِلَى الْحَقِّ أَحَقُّ أَن يُتَّبَعَ أَمَّن لَّا يَهِدِّي إِلَّا أَن يُهْدَىٰ. ***Is, then, He who guides to the truth more worthy of being obeyed, or he who has no guidance at all unless he is guided (by someone else)?***

فَمَا لَكُمْ كَيْفَ تَحْكُمُونَ. ***So, what has happened to you? How do you judge things?***

It is obvious that guiding and being guided are relevant to living and human existence. The verse addresses those people who declare themselves as partners to God or His successors in order to entice other people into obeying and worshipping them.

Islam made a proposal to the people of the book (Christians, Jews) as mentioned in the Qur'an.

The proposal was about rejection of obedience to ungodly powers as the verse says:

قُل يَاهلَ الكِتبِ تَعَالَواإلى كَلِمةٍ سوَا بيَنَنَا وَبَينَكُم. ***O' Messenger! Say, "O' People of the Book! Let us agree on a just word.***

الَّا نَعبُدَ اِلَّا اللهَ. ***We will not worship anyone other than God.***

وَلَا نُشرِک بِہ شَيا. ***We will not ascribe partners to Him.***

وَلَا يَتَّخِذَ بَعضُنَا بَعضا اَربَابا مِّن دُونِ اللهِ. ***We will not elevate anyone amongst ourselves to the station of God.***

فَان تَوَلوفَقُولُواشهَدواباَنَّا مُسلِمونَ. ***And even then if they turn away, say, "be a witness that we were the true Muslims and obedient to Allah".***

1. Usul e Kaffi, Book Alhujjah, Chapter Fi Man wa Inn Allah Azz wa Jall without Imam min Allah, hadith 4 from Imam Al-Baqir
2. An idol placed in Ka'aba for worship before Islam
3. Kaleem Kashani

Fourth Speech: Spirit Of Tawhid – Negation Of

Servitude To Other Than God

The Sphere Of Tawhid

When thinking about Tawhid, it cannot be taken lightly. Firstly, it is the foundation of faith. Secondly, it is an important principle from individual and communal point of view. Thirdly, monotheist and Muslim nation knows very little about it; as a matter of fact, knows hardly anything. Even though it is taught in schools that God is one and not two; yet, majority of monotheists do not grasp different facets of Tawhid until the last day of their lives. Therefore, it is appropriate that an issue that is so important, yet people know so little about, ought to be discussed a great deal.

Incidentally, due to its importance, Qur'anic verses also speak on Tawhid on several occasions in different tones. In the next few days if I wish to talk about this important faith related and practical principle, several examples, markers and evidences can be brought from the gracious verses of Qur'an. The verses to be discussed today also shed light on Tawhid from a different angle as mentioned yesterday as well; today we will go deeper into it.

بِسْمِ اللَّـهِ الرَّحْمَـٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

أَفَغَيْرَ اللَّـهِ أَبْتَغِي حَكَمًا وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنزَلَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكِتَابَ مُفَصَّلًا ۚ وَالَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ مُنَزَّلٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ ۚ فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا ۚ لَّا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ ۚ وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ وَإِن تُطِعْ أَكْثَرَ مَن فِي الْأَرْضِ يُضِلُّوكَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّـهِ ۚ إِن يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ

[***Say***], ***"Then is it other than Allah I should seek as judge while it is He who has revealed to you the Book explained in detail?" And those to whom We*** [***previously***] ***gave the Scripture know that it is sent down from your Lord in truth, so never be among the doubters. And the word of your Lord has been fulfilled in truth and in justice. None can alter His words, and He is the Hearing, the Knowing. And if you obey most of those upon the earth, they will mislead you from the way of Allah. They follow not except assumption, and they are not but falsifying.*** (***Qur'an, 6:114 – 116***)

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا لَمْ يُذْكَرِ اسْمُ اللَّـهِ عَلَيْهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَفِسْقٌ ۗ وَإِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ لَيُوحُونَ إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَائِهِمْ لِيُجَادِلُوكُمْ ۖ وَإِنْ أَطَعْتُمُوهُمْ إِنَّكُمْ لَمُشْرِكُونَ

And do not eat of that upon which the name of Allah has not been mentioned, for indeed, it is grave disobedience. And indeed do the devils inspire their allies [***among men***] ***to dispute with you. And if you were to obey them, indeed, you would be guilty of associating others with Him.***

(***Qur'an, 6:121***)

The Meaning Of Worship

Typically, people worship a being by considering it as the owner of sacred and metaphysical powers, such as in the past, people used to worship idols or sacred and pious personalities. When we say, worshipping God is obligatory, it is because we find sanctity, spiritual respect and reverence in God just like, the Christians believe in certain holiness for Prophet Jesus and his virtuous mother, Mary. They kneel in front of an imagined statue of Jesus or Mary, cry and worship it. This is the prevalent meaning of worship.

There is another meaning or aspect of worship that would apply to a different action of someone performing for another person. The crux of our conversation is that worship is not limited to respectfully standing in front of someone, kneeling, prostrating and supplicating with raised hands. There are some other actions that can also be called worship. And it is not just us saying it; Qur'an says it.

Therefore, in the Qur'anic culture worship takes on broader meaning and we should look for it. We want to worship God and no one else other than God; that is if we want to be monotheist and follow the true Tawhid, we should be careful and not perform the other type of worship for someone other than God. There are many monotheists who apparently did not consider someone other than God sacred and did not prostrate in front of him; yet in their actions, in their hearts and in their souls they were worshipping them according to the second meanings.

Worship And Submission

What are the second meanings of worship? The second meanings are quite simple. Dictionary defines it as submission. Submitting to someone consistently and unconditionally is worship. If a person or a society follows someone categorically; considers his orders worthy of obeying in his life, in his body and soul and in his actions, then he has submitted to him. Where are we coming from? We are saying it based on Qur'anic verses. It is Qur'an that relates worship to submission. When Adi Bin Hatam Tai[1] (son of famous Hatam Tai; Adi's station was much higher than his father) arrived in Medina a few days before converting to Islam, the gracious Messenger (S) saw a cross hanging from his neck and recited the following verse:

اتَّخَذُوا أَحْبَارَهُمْ وَرُهْبَانَهُمْ أَرْبَابًا مِّن دُونِ اللَّـهِ وَالْمَسِيحَ ابْنَ مَرْيَمَ وَمَا أُمِرُوا إِلَّا لِيَعْبُدُوا إِلَـٰهًا وَاحِدًا

They have taken their scholars, monks and the Messiah, the son of Mary, as lords besides Allah. And they were not commanded except to worship one God; there is no deity except Him. Exalted is He above whatever they associate with Him. (***Qur'an, 9:31***)

The verse says that the Christians and Jews have made their scholars, worshippers and Prophet Jesus son of Mary their lord and god even though the Exalted God commanded them not to worship anyone other than Him. When the verse reached Addi Bin Hatam he said, “O’ Prophet of God! It is not true. Since when were our scholars and religious guides considered our Lord? When did we worship them?” He objected to the gracious Messenger (S) and Qur’anic verse. Why? Because he had the same concept of worship as you have now. In his mind worship was like Islamic prayer.

The gracious Messenger (S) in response to Addi’s concept said, “yes, you did not prostrate to them but you accepted unconditionally whatever they said.” [2] وَلٰكِنَّهُم احَلُّواحراما وحَرَّمُواحلالا. They presented what God forbade as permitted in front of you and what God permitted as forbidden and you accepted without questioning. Whatever they said, you submitted. Worshipping is making something the Lord. There is another tradition by Imam Al-Sadiq (‘a) in Tafseer Nur Al-Thaqalayn related to the same verse.[3]

In Islamic civilization worship of anyone other than God, be it a political power; religious power; internal player such as self and carnal desires; external but not an organized political or religious power such as a woman or someone to whom undue respect is accorded or a friend. Obeying them is worshipping them.

The Circle Of Worship

Let me recite a tradition so we know that this Qur’anic civilization is everywhere in the Islamic sources, especially, Shia sources be it Qur’an or Hadith. This narration is from Imam Taqi Jawad (‘a). He says: مَن اَصغىٰ اِلىٰ نَاطِق فَقَد عَبَدَهُ[4]. If someone is totally absorbed in what someone is saying then he is worshipping the speaker. The circle of worship is rather large; it covers not only obeying but also submitting all senses to someone. OK. Now you might say that we should not listen to even good conversation. The tradition later says: فَاِن كَانَ النّاطِقُ عَنِ اللهِ عَزَّوَجَلَّ فَقَد عَبَدَ اللهَ. When someone is talking and he has all your attention and senses towards him, if he is speaking the language of God, then you are worshipping God even though you have handed over your heart, mind, soul and intellect to him. وَاِن كَانَ النَّاطِقُ يَنطِقُ عَن لِسَانِ اِبلِيسَ فَقَد عَبَدَ اِبلِيسَ. However, if the speaker is speaking the language of Satan; the language of Iblis; speaking opposite to the logic and philosophy of Godly intellect and you are listening to him with full submission, then you are busy obeying and worshipping Satan. In other words, the speaker is Satan himself; it is not necessary to call him Satan’s representative; he himself is Satan according to Qur’anic definition.

Unconditional submission of someone who may neither be a political power nor religious is worshipping him. If someone wants to worship only God and does not want to worship anyone other than God; in other words, is a monotheist; he must earmark his total obedience to the Lord of the world, God the Great. A few things, if obeyed are like you worshipped them, include the law. Similarly, communal discipline is another, if obeyed, is like you worshipped it. Same goes for cultural rituals. So, should we not obey the law? Should we discard cultural rituals? Should we give up on discipline? No, try to make

sure that all these things are Godly; so, while obeying or worshipping them you are being God's servant and His worshipper.

Man's horizon expands as he learns from history. All prophets came with monotheistic ideology. We will discuss this subject later in more detail using Qur'an when we discuss prophet-hood. All prophets came to make people monotheist. What does making people monotheist imply? It means taking off the chain of submission to beings other than God from their hands and necks. Qur'an explains it at one place:

وَيَضَعُ عَنْهُمْ إِصْرَهُمْ وَالْأَغْلَالَ الَّتِي كَانَتْ عَلَيْهِمْ.

So, they remove the heavy load from their shoulders and unshackle their chains. (***Qur'an, 7:157***)

This is the aim of the prophets. When you look at Tawhid from this perspective, you will find that it is a mind set and a principle for lifestyle; for managing the society; related to the man's position; and concerned with living in the society. Notice, how this Tawhid is different from the other dry, senseless and non-serious Tawhid that is limited to Allah is one, not two.

The Endless Ocean

I have found so many references in Qur'an that if I wanted to discuss all the relevant verses, I would have to provide five to six pages. I have brought two. These two examples help us understand that submitting to someone other than God is like worshipping him. Pure Tawhid is the soul and foundation of religion. It requires that man should limit obedience to God and only obey the Godly program and the Godly system.

Establish bond with Qur'an. Try to become familiar with Qur'an. Try not to be dependent on me to translate a few verses. Get closer to this never depleting treasure and boundless ocean. I have reminded many times and when I don't give this reminder, I feel a burden on my shoulders. I consider it my responsibility to tell you that it is imperative for you to turn to Qur'an. It is such a great sea, an ocean with no boundary: 5هُوَالبَعرُمِن اَیّ النَّواحِی اتَیتَهُ. It is one line of a couplet. Whatever direction you take, you will benefit.

Whoever spends time with Qur'an, will benefit from it. If you are able to understand it, you will benefit from it; the more you spend time with it, you will gain more knowledge and explanation. The Master of believers (‘a) says in Nahjul Balagha:

مَاجَالَسَ اَحَدُهٰذاالقران اِلَّاقامَ بِزیادَة اونقصان زیاده فی هُدی اونُقصان مِن عَمی۔

No one sat with Qur'an but did not get up with a gain and a loss. The gain was guidance and the loss

was ignorance.[6]

It became easier for him to find the right path. It lessened blindness in his heart. It reduced darkness in his soul. The sentence of the Master of believers starts with “whoever sat with Qur’an” – anyone. I wanted to draw the attention of all brothers and sisters to this fact.

Withdrawal From Qur’an

Why did I emphasize this fact to you? So, all of you brothers and sisters know that there have been many conspiracies in history to lay traps and provide unlimited resources for keeping people away from Qur’an. One of the ruses has been and even today some ignorant people or people with special interests repeat is that no one other than the fourteen infallibles can understand Qur’an. In this regard, I have only one thing to say, the same uttered by the Master of believers about the rebels of Nahrvan.[7] كَلِمَةُ حق يُرادُ بها البَاطِلُ. It is a true statement but the speaker’s purpose is vile. Yes. The Imams (‘a) understand Qur’an; more than we can imagine. They are such great and lofty souls and thinkers that Qur’an is in their grasp; they themselves are Qur’an. No doubt, every one of them is a Qur’an. However, when we say that Imam Al-Baqir (‘a) understands Qur’an very well, does not imply that you and I cannot understand a word; we cannot understand even the superficial meanings. The speaker does not intend to raise the station of the Imam; rather his intention is to keep you away from Qur’an. It is just like this man who was told to pray and he said, “Sir, if prayer is what was performed by my lord, Ali, then how can I pray?”

گرنمازآن بودکان مظلوم کرد

دیگررازین عمل محروم کرد

If prayer is something performed by this oppressed person (Ali), then everyone else should be deprived of it.

It is the same logic. If they understand Qur’an, then why should you and I open it? O poor man! O impoverished person! O one, who is deprived of understanding Qur’an! Pity on you. Pity on your state. Pity, that you do not understand Qur’an. Most of all, pity on you for not only not understanding it yourself but also not letting others understand it. Shame on you for not letting thirsty people benefit from this vibrant running spring. Shame on you. Shame on those who push people away from Qur’an. They make all sorts of excuses for not letting people open Qur’an to understand it. Brothers and sisters! Understand, that today Qur’an is our concern. The Messenger of God (S) stated: فَإذَاالتَبَسَت عَلَيكُم الفِتَنُ كَقِطَعِ اللَّيلِ المظلِمِ فَعَلَيكُمُ بِالقُرآنِ.. When treachery befalls on you like dark parts of the night, you must go to Qur’an.[8]

What day is that? Aren’t we seeing treacheries like dark nights? Are we not seeing misleading paths with

our limited eyesight? Have our eyes become blind to thieves, robbers and monsters? When will we turn to Qur'an? When the Imam of the time is here? He himself is a walking Qur'an. Today is the day when we go to Qur'an. The first condition is that we understand Qur'an.

Who Is The Ruler?

I have searched for verses related to two parts of our discussion today. You should go and look for ten other parts. I impress upon the brothers – those who can understand Qur'an; in other words, they can attend to the translation in Arabic, Farsi or any other language of their choice; they must study it. Those who do not, need to develop their skills – study Arabic; learn Qur'anic lessons; become comfortable with Qur'an; develop companionship with Qur'an. Every day and moment that passes without Qur'an's company is a source of regret.

The first part is from Surah Ina'am. Please pay attention to the tone of Qur'an. Qur'an is unlike regular books. Its subject, its presentation and its Speaker are much above the ordinary level. The whole universe and every existence are at the same plane for the Lord of the world. This is the reason a verse would be revealed in the context of the prevailing situation. You need to get to the message by looking at the underlying meanings in the verse as well as the context of the revelation.

أَفَغَيْرَ اللَّـهِ أَبْتَغِي حَكَمًا. Should I accept someone other than God as the ruler (hakam)? Hakam has been defined as the judge or the ruler in Qur'anic commentaries; someone from whom a man expects a ruling; or desires to get the command; or wants to get a decision. Of course, the Exalted God is the best Judge and the best Ruler; and He will give the command.

أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ. Creation and command are Allah's prerogative. He is the Creator and He will give the directive.[9] وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنزَلَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكِتَابَ مُفَصَّلًا. He is the One Who sent this collection – the Qur'an – with detail, explanation and without any mix-up. مُفَصَّلًا. There is no confusion or adulteration from any other sources. It is absolutely lucid.

وَالَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ. Those who We have given the book. يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ مُنَزَّلٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ. They know that this Qur'an has been revealed by your Lord with truth. For sure, it has come from God. فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ. So, don't be among the doubters. (The Prophet (S) is being addressed.) In case you are indecisive; or become unhinged and become a victim of doubts; you know very well that this book has come from your Lord. God gave you this book and you know it; don't wobble; be resolute.

Conjecture Or Certainty

وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا. Your Lord completed the commandment with truth and justice. The Lord's command was to have a succession of prophets who would elevate mankind to increasingly higher levels until the last prophet came who would bring human race to the edge of a vast horizon – an infinite plane. Then the Lord provided the means to walk, run and achieve the highest possible station. إِنَّا لِلَّـهِ وَإِنَّا

إِلَيْهِ رَاجِعُونَ. And indeed to Him we shall return.[10] This was the Lord's command. This was the destiny determined by the Lord. This was His statement that came to fruition. لَّا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ. None can alter His words. وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ. And He can hear and knows. He can hear the voices of your internal needs and knows the appropriate lifestyle and relationships for you. He can develop a plan of action for you.

وَإِن تُطِعْ أَكْثَرَ مَن فِي الْأَرْضِ. And if you obey most of those upon the earth. See, how the Qur'an persuades a listener's mind. In the first sentence (the first verse) God's kingdom and His decision are addressed that He is the most deserving to be the Ruler and the deciding Authority. The second verse deals with anyone denying the religion and the Lord's commandment; the enemy, the rebel and the opponent may do whatever they want, God's command is absolute. The third verse tells us that we should only obey God and not our desires. يُضِلُّوكَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّهِ. They will mislead you from the way of Allah. إِن يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ. They only follow conjecture.

وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ. They are not but falsifying. Are those who counsel people on how to lead their lives, certain about those ways? If due to simplicity of their minds they are convinced, then they should pray to live for forty or fifty years, so they can see how useless their robust plans were. They don't even have that conviction. It is all theory. However, God does not run this universe on theory; He guides people to the straight path with true genuineness, true knowledge and wisdom. ۝ إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مَن يَضِلُّ عَن سَبِيلِهِ . Indeed, your Lord is most knowing of who strays from His way. وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ. And He is most knowing of the [rightly] guide.

فَكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ إِن كُنتُم بِآيَاتِهِ مُؤْمِنِينَ. Eat of that [meat] upon which Allah's name has been recited, if you are believers in His verses.[11] Here one is amazed that just after talking about the principles – should not obey majority of people; don't act on conjecture; God's order about the last prophet and the religion is final – suddenly Qur'an commands to eat something only if God's name was narrated over it; eat a sheep that was slaughtered in God's name. It is a practical issue and how is it related to what was being stated earlier? If I comment regarding the connection between the two, I would be speculating without a definite proof. There is opportunity to ponder and understand. You should study and look for a connection. However, there are a few things that we can see.

In The Name Of God

First of all, the Lord of the universe is above the universe and beyond the horizon of man's imagination. For Him all issues are at the same level; there is no difference between the principles related issues and ancillary issues. Whatever brings goodness to man is an order from God. There is no difference between an order related to principle and that concerned with ancillary issue; one concerning an individual or a community. This is one point.

Secondly, let us analyze the issue of slaughter and cleansing of soul. What does it mean to call God's name when slaughtering an animal for eating? As you know the pagans, other tribes and communities unaware of unity of God used to call out names of their idols on every occasion. As an example, it has

been reported that Christians used to say بِسمِ المَسِيح[12]. And we also know that the idols of this world and the powers of this world try to put their names at the inauguration of any event, or in the beginning or the preface of anything. Any task that was started in the name of someone other than God will undeniably have its direction away from God. Whenever, you start something in the name of money, desires or something similar, unquestionably, the aim will be towards that whose name was beckoned at the beginning either on the tongue or in the mind. If you start something with money in mind and for money, the direction will be towards earning money; and it will go all the way. The way forward will be focused on nothing but money. However, any task started in God's name and with God in mind will have a Godly direction. The target will be governed by God's commands.

We have been told to slaughter an animal while citing God's name. In other words, your basic and essential need – food – should start with God's name and for God. When you fill your stomach, fill it for God. The result is that the real objective is not filling the stomach but God. If ever you feel that filling the gut takes you away from God, then leave it; don't eat. Let it starve; die because of hunger but don't do anything against the Godly way. Why? Because even though filling the stomach is your basic need but it is not the foundation of your life. The base of your life is God and turning towards Him. We get reminded when we cite Bismillah while slaughtering a sheep or when eating.

Always start with Bismillah. Begin eating with Bismillah. Read Bismillah even before engaging in legal sex. Start any activity with Bismillah – walking around; getting out of the house; in the shop; at your work. What does it mean? It means that every facet of your life – satisfying every need, even though it might be the most important need – should be per God's directive and in God's way.

قُلْ إِنَّ صَلَاتِي وَنُسُكِي وَمَحْيَايَ وَمَمَاتِي لِلَّـهِ رَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ.

My prayer, my worship, my life and my death – yes even death – are all for the Lord of the universe. (***Qur'an, 6:162-163***)

Abraham (ʻa) says, "it is all for the Lord of the universe." He is the Planner and Overseer of the affairs of the world inhabitants and Who has no partner. I do not believe in a God's partner in not just my prayers but in any of my activities such as eating, my movements, my efforts and my struggles. The domain of my existence is totally under God's control and His commandments. When you slaughter the sheep, slaughter it in the prescribed way. A non-believer slaughters in a different way. He eats and opens his shop without taking God's name; instead he remembers someone other than God.

Take the slaughtering as a sign. Consider citing God's name on slaughtering the sheep a sign. Even though, it is an order – a theological command. God's name must be recited; yet take it as a sign of the basic needs of man. Slaughtering an animal should be with God's name. What does it mean? It means that even the most basic needs should be linked with God. Fulfill it for God's sake. The morsel of food you take to satisfy your hunger should be for God. Pacify your hunger for God and develop strength in

your body. Obviously, strength gained for God should be exercised for God. It is a logical conclusion just like 2 plus 2 is 4. This logic carries a lot of depth in it.

فَكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللَّـهِ عَلَيْهِ . Eat of that upon which the name of Allah has been mentioned.

إِن كُنتُم بِآيَاتِهِ مُؤْمِنِينَ. If you believe in His verses. وَمَا لَكُمْ أَلَّا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللَّـهِ عَلَيْهِ. And why should you not eat of that upon which the name of Allah has been mentioned?[13] What is the matter with you? وَقَدْ فَصَّلَ لَكُم مَّا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِلَّا مَا اضْطُرِرْتُمْ إِلَيْهِ. While He has explained in detail to you what He has forbidden for you, excepting that to which you are compelled. Everything else is allowed for you. وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا لَّيُضِلُّونَ بِأَهْوَائِهِم بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ. And indeed do many lead [others] astray through their [own] inclinations without knowledge. إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُعْتَدِينَ Indeed, your Lord – He is most knowing of the transgressors. According to this verse, those who misguide others without having any knowledge are wrongdoers.

Obedience To Satan

وَذَرُوا ظَاهِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَبَاطِنَهُ. Leave anything whose sin is obvious and that whose sin is veiled. There are certain deeds with obvious undesirable outcomes such as killing someone unjustifiably. It is clearly a wicked act and its being sin is evident. However, there are some actions that are not so obvious as sinful. There are many things that man does not fathom as big deals such as talking without knowledge; following someone uninformed; taking God's name and His remembrance lightly; obeying someone other than God; listening to the commandments of someone other than God. These are a few things that one does not consider harmful or source of damaging results. Therefore, we should give up on both kinds of sins – the obvious ones and the not so obvious ones. إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْسِبُونَ الْإِثْمَ سَيُجْزَوْنَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَقْتَرِفُونَ. Those who commit sins will be punished for what they used to do. وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا لَمْ يُذْكَرِ اسْمُ اللَّـهِ عَلَيْهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَفِسْقٌ. Do not eat that on which God's name has not been mentioned. It implies leaving the religion. Here the emphasis is on God's name and His remembrance.

وَإِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ لَيُوحُونَ إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَائِهِمْ لِيُجَادِلُوكُمْ. And the satans send secret signals to each other so they quarrel with you. The satans and the centers of Satanism brainwash their friends, followers, dependents and allies so they argue and clash with you. What is your responsibility in opposing them?

وَإِنْ أَطَعْتُمُوهُمْ إِنَّكُمْ لَمُشْرِكُونَ. If you obeyed them, you will be among the polytheists. Polytheist. You see, it is absolutely clear. Satan opposes the kindest Lord. Following Satan, centers of Satanism or his disciples makes you his agent, his tool, his friend, his ally and his servant; that makes you a polytheist. This is one part.

The Deceived

The second part is related to Surah Al-Shu'ara. Today there is not enough time to go into detailed translation; I will mention it briefly so it is complete. In Qur'an and Hadith from learning and comprehension point of view, the most interesting and effective narrations for people have been the

visualization of the Day of Judgement. When the intent is to make it totally vivid for the audience so it gets into the heart, Qur'an presents a scene from the Day of Judgement. As an example, وَأُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ. The paradise was brought closer to the God-conscious people.[14]

The Day of Judgment is being described, albeit in the past tense. If an incident is bound to happen, it is described in the past tense in the Arabic language; such as:

اقْتَرَبَتِ السَّاعَةُ وَانشَقَّ الْقَمَرُ. The Day of Judgment came closer and the moon split into two.[15]

وَأُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ. And the paradise was brought closer, within reach to the God-conscious.

وَبُرِّزَتِ الْجَحِيمُ لِلْغَاوِينَ. And the hell appeared for the ignorant and deceived. أَغْوَيْنَاهُمْ. We (the leaders) led them astray.[16] The deceived ones were ignorant.

وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ مِن دُونِ اللَّهِ. And the deceived will be asked where their idols were who they used to worship instead of God? Where are the centers that you worshipped and were associated with during your lifetime? Now let us see who they worshipped so we can understand the meaning of worship.

هَلْ يَنصُرُونَكُمْ أَوْ يَنتَصِرُونَ. Do your deities help you or are they helped themselves? It appears that deities themselves need help. It implies that the deities are human and not stone, wood or lifeless idols. فَكُبْكِبُوا فِيهَا هُمْ وَالْغَاوُونَ وَجُنُودُ إِبْلِيسَ أَجْمَعُونَ. The false gods and their followers – the ignorant and deceived ones – – will be thrown on their faces into the hellfire. All gangs of Iblis (Satan) and every person who served Satan in his activity of misguiding Allah's creation, in whatever form, have a place in hell as promised by Allah. قَالُوا وَهُمْ فِيهَا يَخْتَصِمُونَ. They will grab each other's neck. The followers will call their leaders criminals and the leaders will put the burden on the followers. The followers will say, "you were the crooks who tied ropes around our necks and dragged us behind you". The leaders will say, "it was you who followed us". Each one will use a ploy and a maneuver against the other. They will be brawling in hell.

تَاللَّهِ إِن كُنَّا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ. By God, we were in totally apparent ignorance. Even though it was glaringly obvious, yet we did not grasp that we were ignorant. If we had only used a small part of our senses, we would have understood how wrong our path was and how fatal our end; however, we stayed drowned in our ignorance.

تَاللَّهِ إِن كُنَّا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ. By God, we were in totally apparent ignorance. What wrong did we do? إِذْ نُسَوِّيكُم بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ. We made you equal to the Lord of the universe. We should have been afraid of God instead of you. We should have obeyed God instead of you. We should have tried to get closer to God instead of you. We should have asked for livelihood from God instead of you. وَمَا أَضَلَّنَا إِلَّا الْمُجْرِمُونَ. We were led astray by criminals and sinners. فَمَا لَنَا مِن شَافِعِينَ. Today there is no one to intercede for us. وَلَا صَدِيقٍ حَمِيمٍ. And no compassionate friend.

فَلَوْ أَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةً فَنَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ. We wish we could go back to our old life so we could become believers. إِنَّ

فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً There is a lesson in this story. Learn from it. وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ. Most of them are not believers.

When we analyze the people mentioned in these verses, we find that their worship was in the form of blindly following their leaders; they put them at the same station as God. The things they should have asked God for, they asked their false gods. What they should have avoided for God's sake, they did for their false gods.

Supplement

The sphere of Tawhid and the monotheistic (Tawhidi) approach to life and society become clearer as we ponder over the verses related to polytheism and Tawhid.

The magnificent Qur'an does not consider it sufficient not to worship someone other than God to be a monotheistic; it lays down other conditions as well. It demands not obeying an enemy of God. Obeying a being other than God is called a polytheist. Please ponder over the following verses.

Surah Ash-Shu'ara (26), Verses 90-103:

أَفَغَيْرَ اللَّـهِ أَبْتَغِي حَكَمًا. ***Should I look for a ruler other than God.***

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَنزَلَ إِلَيْكُمُ الْكِتَابَ مُفَصَّلً. ***Whereas, He is the One Who revealed the detailed book to you.***

يَعْلَمُونَ أَنَّهُ مُنَزَّلٌ مِّن رَّبِّكَ بِالْحَقِّ وَالَّذِينَ آتَيْنَاهُمُ الْكِتَابَ. ***And those who were given this book know that this Qur'an has been revealed with truth by the Lord.***

فَلَا تَكُونَنَّ مِنَ الْمُمْتَرِينَ. ***Therefore, you must not be among the doubters.***

وَتَمَّتْ كَلِمَتُ رَبِّكَ صِدْقًا وَعَدْلًا. ***And your Lord's word (Qur'an) is absolutely complete from truth and justice point of view.***

لَّا مُبَدِّلَ لِكَلِمَاتِهِ. ***There is no one who can change it.***

وَهُوَ السَّمِيعُ الْعَلِيمُ. ***And He listens and knows.***

وَإِن تُطِعْ أَكْثَرَ مَن فِي الْأَرْضِ يُضِلُّوكَ عَن سَبِيلِ اللَّـهِ. ***And if you follow the majority on earth, they will lead you astray from the Lord's path.***

وَإِنْ هُمْ إِلَّا يَخْرُصُونَ إِن يَتَّبِعُونَ إِلَّا الظَّنَّ. ***They only follow conjecture and act on speculation.***

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مَن يَضِلُّ عَن سَبِيلِهِ وَهُوَ أَعْلَمُ بِالْمُهْتَدِينَ. ***Your Lord knows very well who will go astray and who will seek guidance.***

فَكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللَّـهِ عَلَيْهِ. ***Eat only that animal that has been slaughtered in God's name.***

إِن كُنتُم بِآيَاتِهِ مُؤْمِنِينَ. ***If you believe in the verses.***

وَقَدْ فَصَّلَ لَكُم مَّا حَرَّمَ عَلَيْكُمْ إِلَّا مَا اضْطُرِرْتُمْ إِلَيْه وَمَا لَكُمْ أَلَّا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا ذُكِرَ اسْمُ اللَّـهِ عَلَيْهِ. ***And what is the matter with you that you do not eat that over which God's name has been recited; He has clearly stated the forbidden things; except when you have no choice.***

وَإِنَّ كَثِيرًا لَّيُضِلُّونَ بِأَهْوَائِهِم بِغَيْرِ عِلْمٍ. ***And many people misguide others for their own desires.***

إِنَّ رَبَّكَ هُوَ أَعْلَمُ مَن يَضِلُّ عَن سَبِيلِهِ. ***And your Lord knows these transgressors well.***

وَذَرُوا ظَاهِرَ الْإِثْمِ وَبَاطِنَه. ***And you should give up all open and hidden sins.***

إِنَّ الَّذِينَ يَكْسِبُونَ الْإِثْمَ سَيُجْزَوْنَ بِمَا كَانُوا يَقْتَرِفُونَ. ***And those who commit sins will soon pay a price for their actions.***

وَلَا تَأْكُلُوا مِمَّا لَمْ يُذْكَرِ اسْمُ اللَّـهِ عَلَيْهِ وَإِنَّهُ لَفِسْقٌ. ***And do not eat that over which God's name has not been recited as it is impiety.***

وَإِنَّ الشَّيَاطِينَ لَيُوحُونَ إِلَىٰ أَوْلِيَائِهِمْ لِيُجَادِلُوكُم. ***And the satans give hidden signals to their people so they quarrel with you.***

وَإِنْ أَطَعْتُمُوهُمْ إِنَّكُمْ لَمُشْرِكُونَ. ***And if you obey them, you will be counted among the polytheists.***

وَأُزْلِفَتِ الْجَنَّةُ لِلْمُتَّقِينَ. ***And that day heaven will be brought nearer to the pious.***

وَبُرِّزَتِ الْجَحِيمُ لِلْغَاوِينَ. ***And hell will be put in front of the ignorant.***

وَقِيلَ لَهُمْ أَيْنَ مَا كُنتُمْ تَعْبُدُونَ . ***And the hell-dwellers will be asked whereabouts of those they worshipped.***

مِن دُونِ اللَّـهِ هَلْ يَنصُرُونَكُمْ أَوْ يَنتَصِرُونَ.***Will they leave God and help themselves or you.***

فَكُبْكِبُوا فِيهَا هُمْ وَالْغَاوُونَ . ***They will all be thrown into hell on their faces.***

وَجُنُودُ إِبْلِيسَ أَجْمَعُونَ. ***And the army of Iblis*** (***the Satan***)

قَالُوا وَهُمْ فِيهَا يَخْتَصِمُونَ. ***And they will quarrel in hell and say.***

تَاللَّـهِ إِن كُنَّا لَفِي ضَلَالٍ مُّبِينٍ. ***By God we were all in clear ignorance.***

إِذْ نُسَوِّيكُم بِرَبِّ الْعَالَمِينَ. ***When we put you at par with the Lord of the universe.***

وَمَا أَضَلَّنَا إِلَّا الْمُجْرِمُونَ. ***And we were misguided only by the criminals.***

فَمَا لَنَا مِن شَافِعِينَ. ***And no one is there to intercede on our behalf.***

وَلَا صَدِيقٍ حَمِيمٍ. ***And there is no good friend.***

فَلَوْ أَنَّ لَنَا كَرَّةً فَنَكُونَ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنِينَ. ***If only we could go back and become believers.***

إِنَّ فِي ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَةً وَمَا كَانَ أَكْثَرُهُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ. ***And Our sign is there; and their majority were non-believers.***

1. Adi, son of Hatam Tai, became the leader of the tribe after his father. Impressed by the character and manners of the gracious Prophet he converted to Islam in 9AH. He was among the lovers and companions of the Master of believers and fought in the battles of Camel, Siffin and Naharvan; he sacrificed three of his sons in the battle of Siffin. He left this world in 67AH.
2. Tafseer Nuru Al-Thaqalayn, Tradition number 39 for Surah Tawba, Verse 31
3. Tafseer Ravai Nuru Al-Thaqalayn,; author Sheikh Abd Ali J'atul Uroosi; a scholar from 11th Hijri Century
4. Tohful Uqool, narrator Muhammd Bin Ali, Tradition number 44
5. It is such a sea that whatever direction you come from, you will find goodness as its waves and goodwill as its shore.
6. Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 174
7. Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 40
8. Usul Al-Kafi, Book Fazlul Qur'an, Ch 2, Hadith 3
9. Qur'an, 7:54
10. Qur'an, 2:156
11. Qur'an, 6:117, 118
12. Usul Al-Kafi, Book Zibah, Ch Zibah, Hadith 15
13. Qur'an, 6:118 – 120
14. Qur'an, 26:90 – 103
15. Qur'an, 54:1
16. Qur'an, 28:63

Fifth Speech: Tawhid And Denial Of Class System

بِسْمِ اللَّـهِ الرَّحْمَـٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّـهُ مِن وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَـٰهٍ ۚ إِذًا لَّذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَـٰهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ

وَلَعَلَا بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ ۚ سُبْحَانَ اللَّـهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ

Allah has not taken any son, nor has there ever been with Him any deity. [***If there had been***]***, then each deity would have taken what it created, and some of them would have sought to overcome***

others. Exalted is Allah above what they describe [***concerning Him***]. (***Qur'an, 23:91***)

If we look at Tawhid as a faith that inspires action and puts responsibilities on us, then surely, this belief will put a series of duties and responsibilities on our shoulders. And we stated that we should understand these duties and responsibilities. However, these responsibilities are not specific to a man's individual life; they are more concerned with the communal life in a society and economics. When Tawhid reaches a society, the first thing it does is, it molds the society to this faith. Once this task is accomplished, then comes the monotheistic person's individual responsibilities.

Nonetheless, we will have to understand and know these responsibilities. We take this collection of responsibilities as a treaty on Tawhid. God willing, it behooves on us to recognize these responsibilities to live a monotheistic life. The first responsibility was to serve and obey only God. We discussed it in reference to a couple of verses. Today we will talk about the second responsibility the monotheistic faith places on a monotheist. We will discuss it under the topic of "tawhid and negation of class difference in a society".

We will go into more detail on denial of class difference in a society later. In summary, the monotheistic society as you understand it is a class-free society. It is a society in which different groups of people are not detached from each other as far as rights and privileges go. All men and women live with equal rights. Everyone lives and moves around on the same path with equal means, opportunities and rights. This is a society that the monotheistic faith brings to our vision from "class difference in a society" point of view.

Class System

When we look at history, we find the scourge of class system perpetually present in societies not only in undeveloped tribal societies in far flung areas but also in lands that are the mothers of civilized world. Incidentally, we find such lands to be the worst offenders having the ugliest class system on the pages of history. Class difference is truly a big cruelty in history and a huge blemish on the face of human history. What is meant by class difference? It means that all people living in a society are not equal. Some are forced to have nothing; suffer hardships; serve the other class; and not complain about the deprivation and suffering. The other group has everything; they enjoy luxuries of life; take advantage of all facilities and no one should object. The best example is India. As you know India is the cradle of Aryan civilization and beginning of Aryans' city living. The formation of a nation began in India. It is reported that Aryans came from the North such as Siberia. When they arrived in this area, one group went to India and the other went to Iran. Those who lived in India became civilized faster than the group in Iran.

Even though India is one of the cradles of civilization if not the cradle, yet look at the caste differences. They believed in four major castes; one below the other and hundreds in between. You can find details in books on history of religions. If you enjoy this sort of stuff, do research and ponder; then compare with Tawhid and Qur'an. The four major castes were Brahmins – civilized and priestly in the top tier of the

society. The second caste was Kshatriyas – the princes and soldiers. These two castes had their differences and struggles. Initially the princes had the higher rank and priests were lower. Later, there were some turf wars and the Brahmins succeeded in capturing the top spot and that put the princes and soldiers in the second rank.

Then came the Vaishyas – the farmers, skilled labor and merchants. The first two castes did not do any work for the society. What did a Brahmin do other than mumbling some verses and moving around his hands? What did the princes and landowners do other than increasing their land holdings and wealth and acquiring a little more influence for their activities? The artisans and farmers did all the work for this vast land. They were the third caste. The fourth class was the ordinary people – they were the shopkeepers and those involved in odd jobs. There was another caste that was not Aryan. The first four (the Aryans) used to call them the fifth caste. Being non-Aryans, they were untouchables. What I am relating belongs to history; however, this history is perpetual and is still there.

What I stated before you, continued in India in full force. Perhaps, those who have studied India know that India's deceased leader, Gandhi, eliminated the untouchables caste while questioning its merit. India's former Prime Minister[1] and his daughter, Indira Gandhi – the current Prime Minister[2] – belong to the Brahmin family. Nehru's father Pandat Nehru was a Brahmin. Nehru himself was non-religious and did not like to be called Brahmin or Pandat. In any case, what I am trying to say is that this is not ancient history. Even fourteen hundred or thirteen hundred some years after the rising of monotheistic sun, the class difference still exists in India, the cradle of human civilization.

Godly Nature

Now I want to explain the class difference in a society. There were four classes and according to David Noss[3] who wrote history of religions, there were dozens, rather hundreds of smaller classes in between the four major ones. Two people from two different classes could not marry each other; could not talk to each other or shake hands with each other; could not sit together or walk together or make friends with each other; and on and on. They were separated from each other by an iron wall. Why should they be isolated from each other? What does a Brahmin have that I, a peasant, do not have; or I, a small shopkeeper, do not have? Or what about that big soldier? What distinction does he have that I, an ordinary person, do not have?

If such a question arose, do you know what their answer was? Don't talk rubbish? It is by nature that you have been created in two different groups. It has nothing to do with the law or the society's norms. Both of you have been created in two different ways because when the big god, Brahma, wanted to create humans, he created Brahmin from his head; the landlords, soldiers and princes from his hands; peasants from his arms and the laborers from his feet. The untouchables have no relationship with the Brahmins; they are not from the same pure root. What right does the fourth class created from Brahma's feet have, to consider it equal to Brahmin who was created from the head? All of you were not created

equal. Some of you have been created better from the base and deserve more respect; their higher status is natural; they have been created to be served. The deprivation of the lower class is part of themselves. Such was their logic.

Do you think in such a society someday the class differences will be eliminated?

Is it possible?

How could it happen?

Who could do it?

Will the privileged class show its willingness to let go of its interests for God's sake?

It is not going to happen. The deprived class must demand its rights for the class difference to go. It must demand its share and object to selfish privileged upper class. However, it is almost impossible that the lower class in a society, that I painted before you, will raise their voice. Why not? Because he knows from the depth of his heart that this is the way it is; he has been born this way. Any change is impractical; nothing can be done. This is the way he has been created. When somebody is convinced that God has created him in this manner, it is impossible to hope for a change and that he can enjoy any of the privileges not commensurate with his class. He will say that this is all he can get; this is all his destiny can bring him. Nothing can be done. We have been created with a misfortune; we have been created inferior.

به گوش جان رهی منهیی ندادرداد

زحضرت احدی لااله الاالله

که ای عزیزکسی راکه خواری ست نصیب

حقیقت انکه نیابدبه زورمنصب وجاه

به اب زمزم وکوثرسفیدنتوان کرد

گلیم بخت کسی راکه بافتندسیاه

Listen carefully. A voice from inside of you will block the sound of truth – there is no god but Allah; and will say, “O dear! The one who is destined to be indigent, cannot achieve anything significant. If his destiny has been created with a black thread, it cannot be whitened with the water of Zam Zam and Kauthar.”

If you take something black to a stream or to a sea and start washing, if is naturally black, do you think it would lose its color? Instead, the dust will wash over and the color would become even more pronounced. Therefore, as you noticed in the long history, these societies had such oppression with no solution in sight.

Number Of Gods

However, some reformers were born who altered the thinking. Ponder over this point. This is no place to explain, as it is a specific philosophy associated with religions. Reformers would come and first change the mindset; they would first change the customs in a society. First, they would say that the prevailing philosophy was wrong; then they would convince the people about the brutality of the situation caused by the incorrect philosophy. This is the correct inference to the discussion about the historical changes. It is not true that first the situation on the ground or the society changed and then the philosophy and mindset changed. First the reformers came. This is our history. This is the history of the East. Those who thought and assumed the other way, in our opinion, did not study Eastern history; they only studied European history. This is India; this is China; this is Iran; this is Egypt. The reformers who came, changed the frame of mind; changed the philosophy. Once the thinking changed; ideology changed; then the environment was ready for change in the society. This is the way it was in the long history.

You see, this is the way, India was; Iran was similar; Egypt was the same way and so was China. Wherever you find civilization, situation was comparable. What does it mean? It was stated that humans had been created in different ways. Since they were created on two or more natures, their collective rights could not be equal; could not be alike. If someone said they should be equal, he was wrong. This is what they used to say.

When Islam came, it announced that several gods did not exist. There is only one God. Those who had imagined that two gods had created two types of humans with different levels of privileges and rights, were wrong. There is only one God Who created the whole world. He has total control over the world and its inhabitants and He has created everyone equal. He has created everyone with one base, one nature and one material foundation. There is an abundance of Qur’anic verses in this regard.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُم

O mankind! Worship your Lord Who created you and those before you. (***Qur’an, 2:21***)

Today we will talk about various verses related to this topic. Qur'an says that the source and foundation of all mankind is one. All humans came to this world with same resources. All men carry the potential to ascend to the unlimited and exalted station; all can become superior and greater. Everyone has this innate capability. However, note that there is some creation that is clearly above the normal human level; the prophets and imams are not included in this category. When we said that every human being can rise to unlimited ranks, it does not imply that he can work hard and become a prophet or an imam. It is a separate discussion. What is a prophet and an imam and how can one become a prophet or imam?

We will talk about it in another discussion. Briefly, the prophets and imams have certain attributes and qualities that do not exist in ordinary human beings. However, as you know, the prophets and imams are very few in number and they are exceptional. Whereas, our conversation is about the regular members of a society in general. Although the prophets and imams were no different from the ordinary people from material point of view. ابوهم ادمُ ولامُّ حواء. Adam is the father of all and Hawwa is the mother of all. (Imam Ali)

Communal Discrimination

The people in the fold of Tawhid have been taught and proven that no class difference exists in a society. A society created by Islam is not split into groups. It is impossible that some members of the society have certain rights that others don't. It is never said in this society that people were created on two different bases or roots; or one person was created with clay and the other, for instance, from light. Everyone has the same material roots. Therefore, Tawhid, with the belief that there is one God, Who is the Creator of this world and He runs it, guarantees negation of class system in a society.

There is one other thing to keep in mind. The class system in societies, the way we described it for India, was not always the same. It is not that everywhere the same philosophy was in practice. It is possible that a claim from philosophical and ideological point of view could be made that everyone was at the same level in certain societies or nations; however, from practical point of view, class difference existed; just the way it is in today's world.

Today, if you look around, especially, the capitalist world with capitalism at its zenith, you will find class difference in play; even though nobody says that the laborer and the owner have been created with two different sources and roots. No. They don't say that a certain chief executive of a great company and the laborer in a certain mine were created from different roots. No. However, what actually transpires in the society; laws made for these two types of people; the way they are treated in the society, is analogous to what existed in a society that believed in the two different bases of creation. Some people have unlimited resources, while the other group is indigent. Some grab the whole world's wealth for themselves, while others are prohibited from enjoying the fruits of their manual labor.

The class difference is present in this form in today's world. I even say that this class difference is much more humiliating and brutal than the old one. In the old system, they clearly stated that they were

different from each other; in the current one they say, “we are brothers and at the same level; we support your rights.” However, it is not like this in real life. Same discriminating class differences are practiced. Sometimes there appears to be equality in execution of laws, such as a certain person belonging to the upper class committed a certain crime and was punished accordingly. However, when we look again, we find out that there is something else in play; same class differences and unjust discrimination are in full swing. In reality, only a few have the right to benefit from the resources; a large majority is deprived and the first thing they lack is true understanding and developed thought process.

Education And Grooming

Islam has rejected all this. Here, in summary, let us benefit from the Qur’anic verses that negate the class system in the society. When I pondered over it, I found out that there were a significant number of relevant verses; here I am presenting just a few that are very explicit in teaching this concept.

Exalted God is the Creator, Owner and Planner of all. This is Islamic. Everyone’s creator is God. You might say what difference does it make? Suppose we are convinced that there are two gods. The first impact will be that the community will split into two groups. When we have faith in one God, all members of the society are in one rank, one group and one class. We are all brothers and we are together. I am interested in this statement. I want you to pay attention to this concept that we believe in one God. What does it mean? God is one and not two; it implies that all servants of God belong to one class and not two. It is also because their creator is One.

Did God love one of the groups more when He created them?

وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ وَالنَّصَارَىٰ نَحْنُ أَبْنَاءُ اللَّـهِ وَأَحِبَّاؤُهُ.

But the Jews and the Christians say, "We are the children of Allah and His beloved." (***Qur’an, 5:18***)

Exalted God divulges another of their crimes at another point; He answers and condemns.

قُلْ فَلِمَ تَقْتُلُونَ أَنبِيَاءَ.

Say, "Then why did you kill the prophets of Allah?” (***Qur’an, 2:91***)

If you are such friends of God; you are so close to Him; you are related to Him; why did you murder His prophets; why did you kill His exalted servants? Why? Jews used to say that they were children of God and they had special privileges. No. Islam says it is wrong. At another place Exalted God says:

قُلْ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ هَادُوا إِن زَعَمْتُمْ أَنَّكُمْ أَوْلِيَاءُ لِلَّـهِ مِن دُونِ النَّاسِ فَتَمَنَّوُا الْمَوْتَ إِن كُنتُمْ صَادِقِينَ

Say, "O you who are Jews, if you claim that you are allies of Allah, excluding the [***other***] ***people, then wish for death, if you should be truthful."*** (***Qur'an, 62:6-7***)

If you are true, then wish for death. Get free from this worldly life. Go to your dear, beloved, companion and relative God; this should be your wish. Then He says وَلَا يَتَمَنَّوْنَهُ أَبَدًا But they will not wish for it. A Jew and death wish?!

God is the Creator of everyone; He is the planner of everyone's affairs and He is the One to be worshipped. This is a very important matter, that if the Creator and Deity are one, then indeed all humans will be in one class and one rank. Materially all humans have been created from the same root and source. We are repeatedly stressing and paying special attention to the word "material". All humans have been created from the same base and root from material and physical structure point of view. Nobody has any peculiarity from creation point of view that makes him eligible for any additional rights. Think about this thing too. It is not that he has no special trait.

Why not? It is possible that some people may get some special capabilities under certain circumstances; then it is an accolade. It is possible that a person is born genius. It is possible that somebody is born from accomplished parents; someone may be less capable; another person may have greater strength; someone may be weak and fragile; another person may be handsome; yet another not so good looking. These are differences, but they do not lead to differences in rights. It is not that someone with a strong body can have more rights in the society; absolutely not. It is certainly not that a child born in a rich and influential family will have more possibilities. If Islam opens schools, it will open for all children; if it grooms, it will groom all children; if it provides opportunities for work and efforts in life, it will provide to all.

Islamic Standard

In an Islamic society with Islamic government and under Islamic laws nobody needs someone's favor to get education; to get work; to earn a living; to seek a job; even to get to the highest position. Islamic society is like a vast plain with hundreds of thousands of paths for hundreds of thousands of people for all to benefit. In this level field, all can run to seek spiritual and material objectives; unlike non-monotheistic and ignorant systems that clear the path for some and create barriers for others. As Sheikh Sa'adi said, "they tie the stone and let the dog loose". This is not so in an Islamic society.

Everyone can reach the highest stations in an Islamic society. Just look at Bilal Habshi (RA), who became the prayer caller. A prayer caller has a very exalted position in Islam. Everyone does not get this position. Bilal Habshi, a black African who belonged to the lowest echelons of society according to the prevailing standards of the ignorant society at the time, reached the station of the prayer caller. Salman

Farsi also belonged to a low class per the standards at the time since Arabs considered themselves superior to others and Salman was Farsi from Isfahan; he was a stranger from a remote area; probably did not learn Arabic properly so could not communicate very well; he reaches the zeniths in the Islamic society. There are plenty of such examples.

Therefore, by creation no one gets any merit that becomes the basis for special rights; even though he may be bestowed with some distinct capabilities. All privileges are available to everyone and they are a result of a person's persistent struggle. Everything and every position (I am not talking about some specific stations that have been provided to certain individuals for the guidance of mankind) in the world is His; i.e., for God, and people are beggars at His door; they all have to ask Him; they all have to get it from Him. Everyone extends his hand to Him and everyone is equal at His door.

Imam Al-Sajjad ('a), the son of the Prophet (S), son of Ali ('a), son of Fatima Al-Zahra ('a) and son of Hussain Bin Ali ('a), has to cry, wail and shed tears; and he did all that. And an ordinary person who does not belong to this pious family will also have to do it. Both Imam Al-Baqir ('a) and Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) go out to earn a living and use a pick. An ordinary person also uses a pick. Not only Imam Al-Sadiq ('a) but also Master of the believers ('a) also works during his reign as the Khalifa. During the Prophet's (S) time Master of the believers is a high commander of the Prophet's (S) army. And then he uses the pick, does agriculture, waters his fields and does similar other work. You see if you want to earn money, you have to work; if you want to gain knowledge, you have to study; if you want to attain a position in the political arena, you need to struggle accordingly. The path to effort is open to everyone; whoever tried it, he got there.

This is the Islamic logic and it can be seen distinctly in various verses of Qur'an. Here also I invite you to go to Qur'an. Go and open the Qur'an; look at Qur'an with the intent to ponder so that we don't become target of the verse:

أَفَلَا يَتَدَبَّرُونَ الْقُرْآنَ أَمْ عَلَىٰ قُلُوبٍ أَقْفَالُهَا

Then do they not reflect upon the Qur'an, or are there locks upon [***their***] ***hearts?*** (***Qur'an, 47:24***)

Kingdom And Power

Now look at the first part of verses 84-91 of Surah Al-Mu'minun.

قُل لِّمَنِ الْأَرْضُ وَمَن فِيهَا إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ. Say, [O Muhammad], "To whom belongs the earth and whoever is in it, if you should know?" Tell the polytheists who used to divide and allocate areas of influence of their gods. Ask them who owns the earth and whatever is in it? سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّـهِ. They will say, "To Allah." The polytheists of Mecca had faith in God and considered their idols as intercessors with Him. قُلْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ. Say, "Then will you not remember?" Why don't you understand? Why don't you get into your senses?

قُلْ مَن رَّبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ. Say, "Who is Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Great Throne?" What does throne mean? What are the seven heavens? We have briefly explained some of these things in the previous discussions and others have not been explained. (This is not the opportune time to discuss them, as there is lot to talk about. In any case when there is more time then I can bring them up; they are not that important anyway.) سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّـهِ They will say, "[They belong] to Allah." The Lord's kingdom and sovereignty is spread all over the earth and the heavens. قُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ. Say, "Then will you not fear Him?" Why don't you conform your deeds and thoughts to His command?

قُلْ مَن بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلَا يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ. Say, "In whose hand is the realm of all things – and He protects while none can protect from Him." Those with strong hands, the most they have is control over an object. You, being an owner of a house, can put one brick from one spot to another; that is the extent of your control. You can pick up a piece of iron from one place and put it at another place; you can join two pieces of iron or separate them. That is all you can do with a piece of iron. However, the being that governs the smallest particles of these physical things; that controls the movement of the atoms in these existences; that manages the growth of plants and the internal movements of the bodies of animals and humans; in brief, everything in them is in His jurisdiction, is Almighty God. قُلْ مَن بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ. Say, "In whose hand is the realm of all things" وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ. And He protects وَلَا يُجَارُعَلَيْهِ while none can protect from Him. Try running away from God and seek protection from someone else. As an example, can Christians run away from God and seek refuge with Jesus Christ? Will Christ help them against God? It is not possible. إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ. If you should know? سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّـهِ. They will say, "[They belong] to Allah." قُلْ فَأَنَّىٰ تُسْحَرُونَ. Then how are you deluded?

The Qur'an repeatedly talks about delusion and ignorance. It always wants people not to be ignorant; not to be misled; and open their eyes. Qur'an believes that if people would open their eyes, its purpose would be served and that is so true. This is exactly what we want to say today that if people would open their eyes, our Qur'an will rule the world. However, ignorance and arrogance do not allow it and from the other side some dishonest groups do not permit that the eyes of people should open.

Unity In Creation

بَلْ أَتَيْنَاهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ. Rather, We have brought them the truth and indeed they are liars. We made it clear to them; we gave them the truth. They make excuses for their thinking and the lifestyle they have adopted; they make false excuses. مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّـهُ مِن وَلَدٍ. Allah has not taken any son. وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَـٰهٍ. Nor has there ever been with Him any deity.

As you notice, there is more emphasis on this part of the verse. However, the previous verses also argued about the point under discussion. إِذًا لَّذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَـٰهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ. If there had been more gods, then each deity would have taken what it created. Every god would have taken his creation in a certain direction resulting in conflict – formation of class difference between people; end of discipline and unity among the creation (the world and the people). A person who believes in a god for light; a god for darkness; a god

for humans; and separate gods for upper and lower echelons of society; looks at the creation as many independent silos. However, Tawhid says that the creation is a connected and orderly unit. Humans, mountains, sky, earth and all other presences are mutually bonded and linked. There is unity among them. إِذًا لَّذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَٰهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ. If there were several gods and deities, then every god and deity would have taken its creation in its chosen direction.وَلَعَلَا بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ. And some of those gods would have dominated the other gods.سُبْحَانَ اللَّـهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ. Exalted is Allah above what they describe [concerning Him].

Monotheistic Material

The next part is from verses 21 and 22 of Surah Al-Baqarah. يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ. O People! O humans! Who are being addressed? The ones being called are not the upper or lower classes; not the dark skinned or fair skinned; not a certain group of people. The whole humanity is the focus. Our emphasis is on يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُون. O mankind, worship your Lord, who created you and those before you, that you may become righteous. It means that this worship and submission leads to God-consciousness. What leads to piety and sinless condition is submission to God. Therefore, God-consciousness is abundant in a society where everyone is a servant of God and the society at large is based on submission to God. There will be no scarcity of piety like our times.

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فِرَاشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً وَأَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ ۖ فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّـهِ أَندَادًا وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ

[***He***] ***Who made for you the earth a bed*** [***spread out***] ***and the sky a ceiling and sent down from the sky rain and brought forth thereby fruits as provision for you. So do not attribute to Allah equals while you know*** [***that there is nothing similar to Him***]. (***2:22***)

You see, everything is for everyone. He made it for you. Who is you? All men, everyone. He spread the earth for you; he made the sky robust; and made water fall from the sky; He grew fruit through the rain for you to consume; not for a certain class but for all. Now in such a situation do not consider two gods; do not split men into groups of twos, threes and tens by declaring some entities equals to one God; they all belong to one group and you know it.

Now let us talk about verse number 13 of Surah Hujarat that is on everybody's tongue.

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُم مِّن ذَكَرٍ وَأُنثَىٰ. O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female. Again, the whole mankind is being spoken to. We created you from a man and a woman – all of you. As Amirul Momineen said:

النَّاسُ من جهةِ التّمثالِ اَكفاء

اَبهُم اَدَمُ وَالُامُّ حَوَاء

All human beings have been created the same way; Adam is their father and Hawwa is their mother. They are all same and equal from the beginning of creation. وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا

The formation of groups and tribes is for identification. إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِندَ اللَّـهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ. In God's eyes the most pious deserves the most respect. This is an absolute command of Islam in denial of class system. In other words, belonging to a certain class, family or a group does not entitle you to respect.

And there is a fine, interesting and profound point here. The pious ones being superior to others less pious, still do not get more rights. It is not like the God-conscious get more money or get a larger share in the collective rights of the society. Absolutely not. إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِندَ اللَّـهِ. They garner more respect in the eyes of God. However, piety can create some opportunities. There are some jobs that require piety of character; and that is the end of it. إِنَّ اللَّـهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ. Verily, God knows and is aware.

Next part is from verse 70 of Surah Israel. وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ. And We have certainly honored the children of Adam. وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ. and carried them on the land and sea. We provided means of transportation. As a side note, it may be alluding to contacts between people; if they could not visit each other, it may have created differences between them. وَرَزَقْنَاهُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ. and provided for them of the good things. وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا. and preferred them over much of what We have created, with [definite] preference. Who were given preference? Who are being talked about? Who did We honor? Who did We give good things? And who did We give preference over other creations? All mankind; no particular class or group.

Supplement

The conflict and difference in a society and existence of privileged versus deprived classes is a grave cruelty of the human history. Sometimes the foundation of such a brutal faith system is based on several gods who took hold of the formation and working of different classes; they invented every class based on a specific method and certain rights. Other times the One God created a group naturally and gave it special privileges. Sometimes the different groups came into being based on human faith that claimed that special treatment for the upper strata is a natural thing and deprivation of the lower echelons is also a natural phenomenon.

The creed of Tawhid not only declares everyone a servant of God and His creation but also their education and grooming is a part of Tawhid; it throws out the thought of class difference from the human mind and the society.

The following verses talk about the essence of Tawhid:

Almighty God is the Creator of every being and He manages their affairs. Everyone has come to this

world with the Tawhidi perspective. No one in His creation is better than others, thus no one is eligible for special treatment.

Everyone's superiority and sphere of influence is dependent on his concerted search, effort and hard work. The whole world belongs to God and all mankind is dependent on Him.

Surah Al-Mu'minoon, (23) Verses 84-91:

قُل لِّمَنِ الْأَرْضُ وَمَن فِيهَا إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ. ***Say,*** [***O Muhammad***]***, "To whom belongs the earth and whoever is in it, if you should know?"***

سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّـهِ. ***They will say, "To Allah."***

قُلْ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ. ***Say, "Why don't you understand?"***

قُلْ مَن رَّبُّ السَّمَاوَاتِ السَّبْعِ وَرَبُّ الْعَرْشِ الْعَظِيمِ. ***Say, "Who is Lord of the seven heavens and Lord of the Great Throne?"***

سَيَقُولُونَ لِلَّـهِ. ***They will say, "To Allah."***

قُلْ أَفَلَا تَتَّقُونَ. ***Say, "Then will you not fear Him?"***

قُلْ مَن بِيَدِهِ مَلَكُوتُ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ وَهُوَ يُجِيرُ وَلَا يُجَارُ عَلَيْهِ. ***Say, "In whose hand is the realm of all things - and He protects while none can protect against Him."***

إِن كُنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ. ***If you know.***

قُلْ فَأَنَّىٰ تُسْحَرُونَ. ***Then how are you deluded?***

بَلْ أَتَيْنَاهُم بِالْحَقِّ وَإِنَّهُمْ لَكَاذِبُونَ. ***Rather, we have brought them the truth and indeed they are liars.***

مَا اتَّخَذَ اللَّـهُ مِن وَلَدٍ وَمَا كَانَ مَعَهُ مِنْ إِلَـٰهٍ. ***Allah has not taken any son; nor has there ever been with Him any deity.***

إِذًا لَّذَهَبَ كُلُّ إِلَـٰهٍ بِمَا خَلَقَ. ***Each deity would have taken what it created.***

وَلَعَلَا بَعْضُهُمْ عَلَىٰ بَعْضٍ. ***And some of those gods would have dominated the other gods.***

سُبْحَانَ اللَّـهِ عَمَّا يَصِفُونَ. ***Exalted is Allah above what they describe*** [***concerning Him***].

Surah Al-Hujarat (49), verse 13:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اعْبُدُوا رَبَّكُمُ. ***O mankind, worship your Lord.***

الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ وَالَّذِينَ مِن قَبْلِكُمْ. ***Who created you and those before you.***

لَعَلَّكُمْ تَتَّقُونَ. ***That you may become righteous.***

الَّذِي جَعَلَ لَكُمُ الْأَرْضَ فِرَاشًا وَالسَّمَاءَ بِنَاءً. [***He***] ***who made for you the earth a bed*** [***spread out***] ***and the sky a ceiling.***

وَأَنزَلَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً فَأَخْرَجَ بِهِ مِنَ الثَّمَرَاتِ رِزْقًا لَّكُمْ. ***And sent down from the sky, rain and brought forth thereby fruits as provision for you.***

فَلَا تَجْعَلُوا لِلَّهِ أَندَادًا وَأَنتُمْ تَعْلَمُونَ. ***So do not attribute to Allah equals while you know*** [***that there is nothing similar to Him***].

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُم مِّن ذَكَرٍ وَأُنثَىٰ. ***O mankind, indeed We have created you from male and female.***

وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا. ***And we formed groups and tribes so you could identify each other.***

إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِندَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ. ***In God's eyes the most pious deserves the most respect.***

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ. ***Verily, God knows and is aware.***

Surah Al-Isra' (17), verse 70:

وَلَقَدْ كَرَّمْنَا بَنِي آدَمَ. ***And We have certainly honored the children of Adam.***

وَحَمَلْنَاهُمْ فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ. ***And carried them on land and sea.***

وَرَزَقْنَاهُم مِّنَ الطَّيِّبَاتِ. ***And provided for them of good provisions.***

وَفَضَّلْنَاهُمْ عَلَىٰ كَثِيرٍ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقْنَا تَفْضِيلًا. ***And preferred them over much of what We have created, with*** [***definite***] ***preference.***

1. Jawaharlal Nehru (1889–1964) was one of the leaders in the movement for India's liberation from the British. He studied law at Cambridge University and after watching the sufferings of Indians and the oppression carried out by the British, started the movement for India's liberation.He he joined Congress Party. After India's freedom he was appointed the first Prime Minister of India. His daughter, Indira Gandhi, became Prime Minister sometime after her father.
2. These speeches were delivered in 1970–71 when Indira Gandhi was the Prime Minister of India.
3. In "A History of World Religions" David Noss surveys all religions from ancient times to modern age in four volumes – old religions, Indian religions, religions of Far East and religions of near East.

Sixth Speech: Psychological & Spiritual Effects

Of Tawhid

بِسْمِ اللَّـهِ الرَّحْمَـٰنِ الرَّحِيمِ

الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِلَّـهِ وَالرَّسُولِ مِن بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْقَرْحُ ۚ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّقَوْا أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّـهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ

Those [***believers***] ***who responded to Allah and the Messenger after injury had struck them. For those who did good among them and feared Allah, is a great reward. Those to whom hypocrites said, "Indeed, the people have gathered against you, so fear them." But it*** [***merely***] ***increased them in faith, and they said, "Sufficient for us is Allah, and*** [***He is***] ***the best Disposer of affairs."*** (***Qur'an, 3:172-173***)

Communal Effects Of Tawhid

We have discussed the effects of Tawhid on society and the shape Tawhid gives to the human and monotheistic society. However, there are other discussions relevant to this subject but for various reasons we have avoided them. The most important is the impact of Tawhid and the ideology of Tawhid on financial matters of the society. It deserves an in-depth discourse; however, getting a conclusion from Qur'anic verses is subtle and complex and it does not have a place in layman discussions. Briefly, Qur'an says:

وَاٰتُوهُم مِّن مَّالِ اللهِ الَّذِى اٰتاكُم.

Give from the wealth God has given you. (***4:5***)

What wealth you have received, belongs to God; give some of it to the poor when they need it. And this is what the monotheistic ideology says about wealth. However, drawing conclusion from all wealth related verses in Qur'an according to monotheistic ideology is a highly academic exercise; it is hard and complex. It is not like we just write something on a piece of paper, hand over to you and then discuss it for an hour. This is why we did not go deep into it.

The other reason is that we have some very important discussions related to faith related principles and Islamic ideology and some other subjects we need to take care of before the end of Ramadan; God-willing we need to finish or bring to some logical conclusion. If we continue to delve into all these issues, we will not be able to get to where we wish to go. These are two reasons that we could not continue any

longer with the discussion on the effects of monotheism on society.

A Responsible Society

Even though today's topic is monotheism, yet it is connected with earlier discourses we delivered on faith, effects of faith and the glad tidings given to believers. We described faith as a condition that inspires action and makes one responsible. We also said that it should be with intelligence, not with closed eyes; furthermore, it should not be devoid of good deeds. These are some of the discussions we have had earlier. Belief in monotheism is a faith that is with intellect and understanding for an aware monotheist. This faith inspires and assigns responsibility. The responsibility that monotheistic faith places on a monotheist is the greatest, heaviest and most effective of all responsibilities that other Islamic principles spawn. As a matter of fact, the bottom line of the monotheistic responsibility is that a monotheist has to build a monotheistic society and eliminate all signs of polytheism.

Let me remind something to those friends and brothers who know Arabic to some extent. If you ask any student of religion the literal meaning of Tawhid, he will say, "making it one". The root of the word Tawhid is wahdat; wahdat means "to be one". It means merging several gods into one God; turning a non-monotheistic society into a monotheistic one; converting a polytheistic mind and heart into a monotheistic mind and heart.

Benefits Of Monotheistic Discussion

Belief in monotheism is a monumental faith and a weighty commitment that is greater than a commitment put forward by any other Islamic belief or non-Islamic school of thought. Eliminating poverty from a society is a responsibility, so is balancing wealth distribution; it is possible that a school of thought takes care of it. Eliminating war is another responsibility that possibly has been assumed by another school of thought and some people with inclination towards this school of thought may internalize this responsibility. This is all well and good. However, if we ponder about Tawhid in its true sense – believing in one God, establishing Godly society, Godly law and Godly system encompasses all the responsibilities I mentioned earlier and some more. As you can see the responsibility of Tawhid is colossal.

Tawhid is a faith with mindfulness and commitment. Its pledge is weightier, absolute, comprehensive and all-inclusive as compared to other religious or non-religious commitments. This is monotheism. If such is the meaning of monotheistic faith and if it is true and unconditional faith, then it deserves to be looked at closely. Let us observe the impact this action-inspiring belief has on the psychology of those who have this faith and what impact there ought to be. We will see how this faith affects an individual who believes that there is only one God in all facets, angles and corners of his life. We will examine what effect, believing that there is only one God in all facets of the universe, has on one's soul.

There are two advantages of this discussion. We will become more familiar with monotheism. We will

understand Tawhid from the perspective of education for man's soul and psychology. If someone extracts some magical meanings of Tawhid, we will say, "it is wrong. The effects of Tawhid that you are pointing out, are incorrect; what I am saying is the truth." Therefore, recognize Tawhid. This is the first benefit.

The second advantage is that we will diagnose if we ourselves are monotheists or not. It is a standard to identify Tawhid in our hearts. How do I know if I am a monotheist? How do I know that this faith has penetrated my soul and the depths of my existence? When I can identify the psychological symptoms of Tawhid; when I see the effects of this medicine on my existence; then I will know if I have Tawhid. I will know if I have used the medicine correctly or not; if I have received the right medicine or an imitation. If I discover that I do not have the desired effects in my existence, I will know that the medicine was fake. If it was the right one, the symptoms would have been different. If I start talking about the psychological effects of Tawhid, it will turn into a very long conversation.

Broad Vision Of A Monotheist

The psychological impacts of Tawhid can be summarized in a few sentences. One of the effects of Tawhid on a monotheist's soul is that his vision gets broadened. A monotheist is safe from narrow mindedness and imprudence. A monotheist does not say that he was defeated on this front or he and his allies had to retreat from a front and they suffered a loss. He is not so short-sighted. He understands that the limits of monotheist mindset go as far as humanity's life. If you compare the life of a man with the life of humanity, 10, 20, 50 or 100 years are not more than a moment.

In other words, the vision of a monotheist is not restricted to material problems and trivial needs. When a monotheist looks at the world, he sees tens and hundreds of greater and more cherished human needs in addition to the material needs. His mind, his whole thinking and all senses are not limited to base, lowly and trivial needs. It is like some people seemingly Godly and spiritual on the outside, yet materialistic on the inside, have trapped themselves in such needs. When a monotheist looks out, he sees a vast future spread out as far as he can see. As I submitted a few days ago, a monotheist does not consider this world to be the end. He sees the end of this life contiguous to the hereafter. He thinks of the next world as the beginning and end of the worldly life. He does not consider death as the end of life or the end of the road; rather he looks at death as a window, a path and a bridge to a vast world. This is the attribute of Tawhid.

Undue Fear

Everything is over at death for an atheist even though he might be totally selfless and attracted to great humanistic ideas. Whereas, for a monotheist, time of death is the beginning of a much broader life and very interesting and attractive surroundings. A materialistic person who is very much devoted to virtuousness may be ready to go into oblivion. However, a monotheist who is equally devoted to

virtuousness is like a moth around a lamp – only interested in sacrificing himself and his interests. If such a monotheist is not that dedicated and is not willing to give up so much, even then it is easier for him to fall to a place considered by the materialist as nihility since he does not think of it as nonexistence. He knows this new place as another phase and another place of his vast human life.

One of the impacts of Tawhid on a monotheist is that he throws out the roots of fear from inside him; and this is very important. There are several references to this effect in glorious Qur'an and we will present to you a few of them in the form of verses. The believers are addressed:

فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ وَخَافُونِ إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ.

Do not be afraid of others; fear Me and who fears God is afraid of no one. (***Qur'an, 3:175***)

One who is monotheist and believes in God's might, fear leaves him. When I look around and take stock, I find that it is the fear that takes away this world and the hereafter from the fearful. Fear of poverty causes one not to give charity. The worry of falling into trials and tribulations results in a person being oppressive to others. The fear of losing a couple of days of worldly life – a life that is so base and uncertain that no one knows if it would be two days, three days or longer; there is no written guaranty that one would live until a certain year or date – fear of losing such unreliable life prompts one to destroy collective lives of others. Greed is also related to fear. Fear is the foundation of bad luck and worries. If you study the long history and research the reasons for only a minority being on truth, it was all fear. Fear caused people not to follow the truth; fear became the reason that people underwent great suffering at the hands of some tyrannical people.

The Effects Of Fear

When the Islamic society, as you know, succumbed to deviation and decline, what was the primary reason that Muslims who received this blessing – true Islam – free of cost (the first generation made the sacrifices, the second got it free) and could not save it? It was nothing but fear.

Who among the people around Master of believers and within the circle of his teachings, did not recognize Mu'awiyyah?

Who in Hijaz did not know Mu'awiyyah?

Who did not know Yazeed bin Mu'awiyyah?

Who was not familiar with Abdul Malik bin Marwan?

Who was not acquainted with the family of the Ummayyads?

Who could not comprehend the condemnation of this family by Qur'an, the speech of the Prophet (S) and the historical facts? Everyone knew but fear was there. These people became agreeable and cooperative with the tyrants; they became their workers and used to dance with pleasure; there was no other reason except fear. This fear ran from the lowest rank to the highest in the society; even the famous ones that people counted on were fearful.

Abdullah bin Umar[1] was a symbol of incompetence, weakness of soul and denial of truth. Even though Abdullah bin Zubair was also not on the side of truth, yet overall people find him more palatable than Abdullah bin Umar. Abdullah bin Umar was the person who after the murder of Usman did not pay allegiance to Imam Ali ('a). Why did he not do that? He said that the situation was unclear to him. He was being cautious. He was being extra cautious in this religious affair and did not give baya (allegiance) to Imam Ali; because in his perception all the Muslims were not on the same page. If you did not have some personal motive, had you not heard:

لَاتَّستَوحِشُوافِي طَرِيقِ الهُدى لِقِلّةِ اَهلِه.

Do not be afraid of taking the guided path just because only a few are treading it [2]

If you had not heard from the Master of the Faithful, did the message not get to you from the most gracious Prophet (S) or the noble Qur'an? You did not know that in God's way you should not stray from the right path – the guided path – or change your decision due to lack or excess of followers. One should check if the path is right or not. He did not follow the life-influencing Islamic principle – Don't think about what others are saying; don't pay attention to the majority that is either ignorant or bound by their personal agendas. Since Abdullah bin Umar could not or did not follow this principle, he went away from the Master of the faithful and did not pay his allegiance as a precaution.

Several years after the martyrdom of the Master of the believers when Mu'awiyyah had governed for so many years, this Abdullah bin Umar had a chance to observe him closely; if he did not know Mu'awiyyah earlier, by this time he would have recognized his character. Later on Yazeed's three reprehensible years of reign went by; Marwan bin Hakam, father of Abdul Malik bin Marwan – the successor of Yazeed – also finished his short years of governance; and Abdul Malik bin Marwan became the ruler. All this time Abdullah bin Umar was in Medina in the middle of historical happenings. He was not ignorant of what was going on in the Islamic society. People were not strangers to him. He had recognized Umayyads. The ruthless Hajjaj bin Yusuf Saqafi came to conquer Mecca on behalf of Abdul Malik. Mecca at that time was under the reign of Abdullah bin Zubair. Initially Abdullah bin Zubair held his position fighting ferociously against Abdul Malik's Syrian army. When the khalifa decided that this battle should be finished, he sent Hajjaj bin Yusuf, who was the most vicious of all people. He came; set up catapults on the hills around Mecca and started throwing boulders on the house of God. He killed large number of people; then murdered Abdullah bin Zubair and hung his body on the gallows.

Satanic Life

Hajjaj bin Yusuf was sitting in his tent writing his victory report for the seat of government in Syria. Abdullah bin Umar was also in Mecca at that time. Groups of people started coming to give baya (allegiance) to Hajjaj bin Yusuf. It was not that people did not know Hajjaj. They knew him well. It was not that people came to realize his piety, honesty, Islamic capability and good deeds. They all knew the scum of the earth he was and the wretched and despicable person he represented. They were well aware. But since he was the conqueror; he had the might and if they did not pay allegiance to him, he would put them to sword. It was all fear that drove them en-masse to Hajjaj.

Along with thousands of people, Abdullah bin Umar came to Hajjaj's tent that was set up outside the city. He asked the guard to tell Hajjaj that Abdullah bin Umar had come. He thought that he would be embraced and get a royal treatment. He did not know that the people in power never cared and always forgot favors done by others. He thought that since he helped Mu'awiyyah at one time and did not help the Prophet's (S) family, he would be given importance. Little did he know that these people did not return favors.

Abdullah bin Umar came and said, "I am Abdullah bin Umar." The attendant told Hajjaj about his arrival. He told the attendant to let him in. Abdullah came; Hajjaj did not move an inch from his sitting position; did not give him any respect; did not even lift his head from the piece of paper to look at him and offer greetings. Abdullah said, "My lord, give me your hand so I could pledge allegiance to you." Hajjaj asked, "Who is talking?" He responded that he was Abdullah bin Umar. Hajjaj asked, "Who is he speaking to?" This Abdullah bin Umar who did not ask Imam Ali's hand to pledge allegiance as he was being cautious; is now saying to Hajjaj, "O lord! Give me your hand so I could pay you allegiance."

What did Hajjaj do? He extended his foot and said, "My hand is busy in writing; pledge allegiance on my foot." Abdullah did it. What a dishonorable and immoral person Abdullah bin Umar was! He pledged allegiance to Hajjaj for a couple of days of squalid life that had no reward in this world or the hereafter; a life that would give him a few kilos of food and that is all; a life that did not bring him closer to God, rather to Satan. Why did he do that? It was nothing but fear.

Spiritual Life

In Imams' ('a) supplications, particularly the ones for the month of Ramadan (I highly encourage everyone to read and ponder) there is a lot of emphasis on the psychological topics related to soul. Those appreciating and reciting supplications should understand the emphasis placed on these; do not take them lightly. Do not read them carelessly without understanding; pay close attention to what you are reading. Those who deny the supplications altogether should try to seek out the knowledge hidden in them.

As an example, Imam Al-Sajjad ('a) says in one supplication:

اَللّٰهُمَّ عمَرنِی ماکان عُمری بِذلَةٌ فیِ طاعَتِکَ. O God! Give me long life only if it is in your obedience.[3] I do not wish to live an absurdly long life of 100 or 120 years; only so long that I am in absolute service to you; a long life that extends my servitude to you; a life that keeps me busy in work and deeds; not a pointless long life.

اَللّٰهُمَّ عمَرنِی ماکان عُمری بِذلَةٌ فیِ طاعَتِکَ فَاذِاکانَ عُمرِی مَوتَعاللِشَّیطانِ فَاقبِضنِی اِلیکِ

O God! Give me long life only if it is in your obedience. When my life becomes a playground for Satan, then take me away. (Pay close attention and get a good grasp of the meaning of the word, Satan; the meaning we presented earlier and Qur'an is also describing – the troublemaking forces; every individual who pulls humans and humanity towards sedition, sins and destruction.) O God! Whenever, you see that my life has become a grazing ground for Satan; when I have become means for Satan to benefit from; when I am helping the enemies in their nefarious aims; when I am helping them in their nasty propaganda; when I have become a tool for them; they are taking advantage of my ignorance and arrogance; when you see that through me the unscrupulous are achieving their desires and good pious people are suffering failures; when you see that unknowingly I have become a servant of Satan, فَاقبِضنِی اِلیکِ take me away from this life. I don't want such a life.

If someone recites such a supplication with a true heart, through the depths of his soul and thorough understanding of its meanings, what kind of a life will he have? Through supplications our Imams (‘a) teach us that for those lives that benefit the enemies, death is superior to life.

Worrying About This World

Why are you afraid of death? O wretched Abdullah Bin Umar! Leave this life. What would have Hajjaj done to your life? You did not know if you would live ten minutes or ten years after that humiliating encounter. And if you were to live, what sort of a life would you have? Hajjaj could end your life anytime. Let it go. Did you not see Abdullah Bin Abbas's sad demise; how miserably he left this world? Abdullah Bin Abbas deserted Imam Ali (‘a), then Imam Hasan (‘a) and then Imam Hussain (‘a). You should have learnt a lesson from his despondent end.

Abdullah Bin Abbas did not live very long. His heart was full of despair. He sat his son, Ali bin Abullah bin Abbas, next to him and was sharing his regrets. Apparently, they were looking at a slaughtered cow with a sick heart; the heart was in pieces. He told his son that his own heart was broken in more pieces than the cow's. His life was utterly miserable. What had happened?

Mecca was the city that became a sanctuary for Abdullah Bin Abbas from the wrath of the Master of the faithful; he felt more secure here than the responsibility Imam Ali (‘a) wanted to give him. Now Mecca had become hell for Abdullah Bin Abbas. I submit that Abdullah Bin Abbas's Tawhid was not right; so was Abdullah Bin Umar's. If he truly was a monotheist:

موحدچہ درپای ریزی زرش

چہ شمشیرھندی نھی برسرشی

امیدوھراستی نباشدزکس

ھمین است معنای توحیدوبس

You put a heap of gold and silver at the feet of a monotheist or put a sword to his neck, he will not be tempted or intimidated. (Saadi)

The Power Of Tawhid

Saadi is right. The impact of Tawhid's most important psychological influence on a man's soul is that once the monotheist determines the goal of his existence (that is in God's way), he is not afraid of any enemy on this path. I am not implying that he would never be afraid but fear should not overcome him. He should not have such anxiety in his existence that would paralyze him on God's path. A fear, a concern or an alarm that becomes a barrier in performing good deeds is an excellent breeding ground for humiliation, oppression and tragedies. One should cast aside such a fright.

In any case, I have chosen verses from two Surahs of Qur'an. One is Surah Aal-e-Imran and the other Surah Ra'ad. The 172nd verse of Surah Aal-e Imran is:

الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِلَّـهِ وَالرَّسُولِ مِن بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْقَرْحُ ۚ لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّقَوْا أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ

Those* [*believers*] *who responded to Allah and the Messenger after injury had struck them. For those who did good among them and feared Allah is a great reward. (***Qur'an, 3:172***)

Let us study different parts of this verse. الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِلَّـهِ وَالرَّسُولِ. Those who responded to the calls of Allah and the Prophet (S). What does it mean? They accepted the call of Allah and the Prophet (S); accepting the call with action and not just saying it in their hearts that they accepted the call. No, they followed the Prophet (S). When was it? When they were wounded in the battle ground. مِن بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْقَرْحُ. After they were wounded. لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّقَوْا أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ. There is great reward for those among this group who were God-conscious and performed good deeds.

As you know that this verse is related to the battle of Uhud. Some people took flight in this battle while Allah's Prophet (S) was calling them. Some were frightened and did not show up. There were some who

were wounded, yet stayed. The Master of the believers suffered more or less seventy one wounds; I don't remember exactly. Similarly, there were other companions of the Holy Prophet (S) with a bit fewer wounds. Some people paid heed to the Prophet's call while others did not and took off. This verse is talking about the rewards for these people. Please note that we should look at the principles underlining this verse. We should not get stuck in the battleground of Uhud. We should not bound the Qur'anic principles inside the incidents of early Islam that became the impetus for revelation of the verses. What is important for us is the principle stated in the verse. What is the verse trying to say?

Who Are Your Own Family?

It is a point from Qur'an that I might have referred to in the context of some incident. There is a basic Islamic principle being described here. Please note. As an example, in the incident of Prophet Noah ('a) the Prophet boarded the boat; got his own family, his followers, believers and companions of his struggle on to the boat. The rest of God's creation went to the grave swallowing wrath of the storm sent by Him. Flood was coming; water was in uproar; and deadly waves were drowning people all around. One of Prophet Noah's ('a) sons was not his follower and did not board the boat. This is an incident full of points and hints.

Prophet Noah ('a) is elderly with white beard and he has this young son – his darling. The Prophet tells him to come on board, otherwise, he will drown. The son says that he would not board the boat; he would climb a mountain and not drown; he did not need his father. During this conversation a big wave comes between the two; father does not see the son again and the son drowns.

From human point of view Prophet Noah ('a) is heart-broken; after all, his son died. He describes his sorrow to the Lord of the universe and says, "O Lord! You had promised that you will rescue my family; my son was also part of my family; I wish he had survived." Then the Lord addresses him: إِنَّهُ لَيْسَ مِنْ أَهْلِكَ. [4] Indeed he is not of your family. إِنَّهُ عَمَلٌ غَيْرُ صَالِحٍ. His deed was other than righteous. He was a bad character. We are not concerned with this part of the verse. The first part presents and teaches us an Islamic principle.

The principle says that two brothers with different mindsets are strangers and two strangers with similar views are brothers. If a father and son do not have similar thinking – one believes in God and the other denies Him; one struggles for God and the other for Satan; there is no relationship between the two in such a situation. They are not of the same family. Blood relationships and relationships based on family ties are secondary in the eyes of Islam. Relationships based on belief come first. This is an Islamic principle.

God Is Sufficient For Us

When one looks at traditions, he finds more evidence in support of the principle stated above. I saw a tradition from Imam Al-Baqir ('a). He says: اَلمؤمِنُ اَخُوالمؤمِنِ لِابيِ اُمِّهِ. A believer is another believer's real

brother[5]. In other words, two real brothers may have East to West distance between them; whereas, two believers living on the opposite sides of the planet would be real brothers. This is the situation where someone, who is like minded with you; is struggling on the same front as you; and has the same faith as you. This is an Islamic principle. Let us ponder over these points in Qur'an. What does Qur'an want to say? What principle, what philosophy, what historical fact, that may have been narrated at hundreds of places elsewhere, is being presented here. Now let us focus on these verses.

الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ. Those to whom hypocrites said[6]. Some people told those, being rewarded, a few things. What did they say? إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ. Indeed, people have gathered against you, so fear them. The hypocrites told the good people that enemies were gathering against them; they were conspiring; cooperating; they wanted to destroy them; therefore, they should be afraid of them. These things were told by the so called well-wishers and cautious people to the faithful; those faithful who have been promised tremendous reward in the previous verse. What did the believers say to the well-wishers and the cautious on listening to their advice? فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا But it [merely] increased them in faith. Enemy's conspiracy increases a believer's faith; how interesting? Then they said: وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّـهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ and they said, "Sufficient for us is Allah, and [He is] the best Disposer of affairs." He is the best One that a man can assign his work to.

حَسْبُنَا اللَّـهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ. Sufficient for us is Allah. What does it mean, "Allah is sufficient for us"? It has several meanings and all are correct. God is enough for us – He helps us with His patronage. God is enough for us – He puts nature's forces aligned with truth in our direction. God is enough for us – we may not succeed in this world but if He is pleased, it is enough for us.

فَانقَلَبُوا بِنِعْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّـهِ وَفَضْلٍ لَّمْ يَمْسَسْهُمْ سُوءٌ. So they returned with favor from Allah and bounty, no harm having touched them. They returned from Allah with bounties and no harm got to them.

وَاتَّبَعُوا رِضْوَانَ اللَّـهِ. And they pursued the pleasure of Allah. وَاللَّـهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ And Allah is the possessor of great bounty.

Qur'an does not tell us what happened to them. It does not matter. These people got the great bounties; suffered no harm and were pleased. How were they made happy? Either they were martyred in the battle or came home to Medina safe and sound; it is the same. If they returned home, then they suffered no pain, as the battle wounds heal very quickly in the cozy atmosphere of family and the pleasure of victory.

فَانقَلَبُوا بِنِعْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّـهِ وَفَضْلٍ. So they returned with favor from Allah and bounty. If they suffered bloody martyrdom, they were rewarded with even more unlimited bounties –nothing unpleasant; absolute peace with no trace of anxiety. فَانقَلَبُوا بِنِعْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّـهِ وَفَضْلٍ لَّمْ يَمْسَسْهُمْ سُوءٌ. No mischief reached them.

إِنَّمَا ذَٰلِكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ. That is only Satan who frightens his supporters. There is no doubt that these people who are trying to scare you are satans. It is the Satan who frightens his friends. He says, "They are conspiring against you; the enemy has gathered a large army; the hypocrites have joined the

adversary; the hypocrites are hiding swords under their clothes and they are trying to kill you." It is Satan who is trying to intimidate you.

Will you be frightened? It depends on who you are. If you are his friend, you will get frightened. If you are not his friend, then you will not be scared.

See how short the verse is but carries such deep meanings. إِنَّمَا ذَٰلِكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ. Indeed, that is Satan.

يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ. Who frightens his friends. فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ. So do not be afraid of them. وَخَافُونِ. And be afraid of me. Obey my commands. إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ. If you are believers.

وَلَا يَحْزُنكَ الَّذِينَ يُسَارِعُونَ فِي الْكُفْرِ. And do not be grieved, [O Muhammad], by those who hasten into disbelief. إِنَّهُمْ لَن يَضُرُّوا اللَّـهَ شَيْئًا. Indeed, they will never harm Allah at all.

يُرِيدُ اللَّـهُ أَلَّا يَجْعَلَ لَهُمْ حَظًّا فِي الْآخِرَةِ. Allah intends that He should give them no share in the Hereafter. وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ. And for them is a great punishment.

O Lord! For the sake of Muhammad (S) and his progeny ('a) let Qur'an be our helper in this world and the hereafter.

O Lord! For the sake of Muhammad (S) and his progeny ('a) do not keep your blessings away from us.

Supplement

The divine message of Tawhid is the foundation of a monotheistic society; a society that distances itself from class system and is based on God's laws under God's commands. It is set up in such a way that its effects become obvious in a person's personality, attitude and courage. The faith of Tawhid acts in two ways. Firstly, it forms a society and secondly, grooms a person. Due to the influence of his faith a devotee of Tawhid develops certain attributes such as tremendous hope, untiring search and struggle, no fear, open minded and desire to choose the right path.

It is one of the effects of Tawhid. The magnificent Qur'an has narrated the influences of faith in certain places and in this context has hinted at the attributes of monotheists and their performances. Here we will look at some of them.

الَّذِينَ اسْتَجَابُوا لِلَّـهِ وَالرَّسُولِ مِن بَعْدِ مَا أَصَابَهُمُ الْقَرْحُ . ***Those [believers] who responded to Allah and the Messenger after injury had struck them.***

لِلَّذِينَ أَحْسَنُوا مِنْهُمْ وَاتَّقَوْا أَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ . ***For those who did good among them and feared Allah is a great reward.***

الَّذِينَ قَالَ لَهُمُ النَّاسُ إِنَّ النَّاسَ قَدْ جَمَعُوا لَكُمْ فَاخْشَوْهُمْ . ***Those to whom hypocrites said. Indeed, the people have gathered against you, so fear them.***

فَزَادَهُمْ إِيمَانًا. ***But it*** [***merely***] ***increased them in faith.***

وَقَالُوا حَسْبُنَا اللَّـهُ وَنِعْمَ الْوَكِيلُ. ***And they said, "Sufficient for us is Allah, and*** [***He is***] ***the best Disposer of affairs."***

فَانقَلَبُوا بِنِعْمَةٍ مِّنَ اللَّـهِ وَفَضْلٍ. ***So they returned with favor from Allah and bounty.***

لَّمْ يَمْسَسْهُمْ سُوءٌ. ***No mischief reached them.***

وَاتَّبَعُوا رِضْوَانَ اللَّـهِ. ***And they pursued the pleasure of Allah.***

وَاللَّـهُ ذُو فَضْلٍ عَظِيمٍ. ***And Allah is the possessor of great bounty.***

إِنَّمَا ذَٰلِكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ يُخَوِّفُ أَوْلِيَاءَهُ. ***That is only Satan who frightens his supporters.***

فَلَا تَخَافُوهُمْ. ***So do not be afraid of them.***

وَخَافُونِ. ***Be afraid of me.***

إِن كُنتُم مُّؤْمِنِينَ. ***If you are believers.***

1. Abdullah bin Umar was the son of second khalifa. He did not participate in the battles with the Prophet (S) due to young age. He used to display more than actual worshipping. He was one of those who did not declare allegiance to Imam Ali ('a). When Hajjaj bin Yusuf came with an army to Mecca to fight with Abdullah bin Zubair and captured Mecca, Abdullah bin Umar paid him allegiance in a very humiliating manner. After a while he was murdered on the orders of Hajjaj in 73 AH.
2. Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 201
3. Sahifa-e-Al-Sajjadia, Dua Makaramul Akhlaq, Hadith No. 31
4. Qur'an, 11:46
5. Usul-e-Kafi, Book of Iman and Kufr, Chapter Ikhwatul Momineen, H2
6. Qur'an, 3:173-176

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